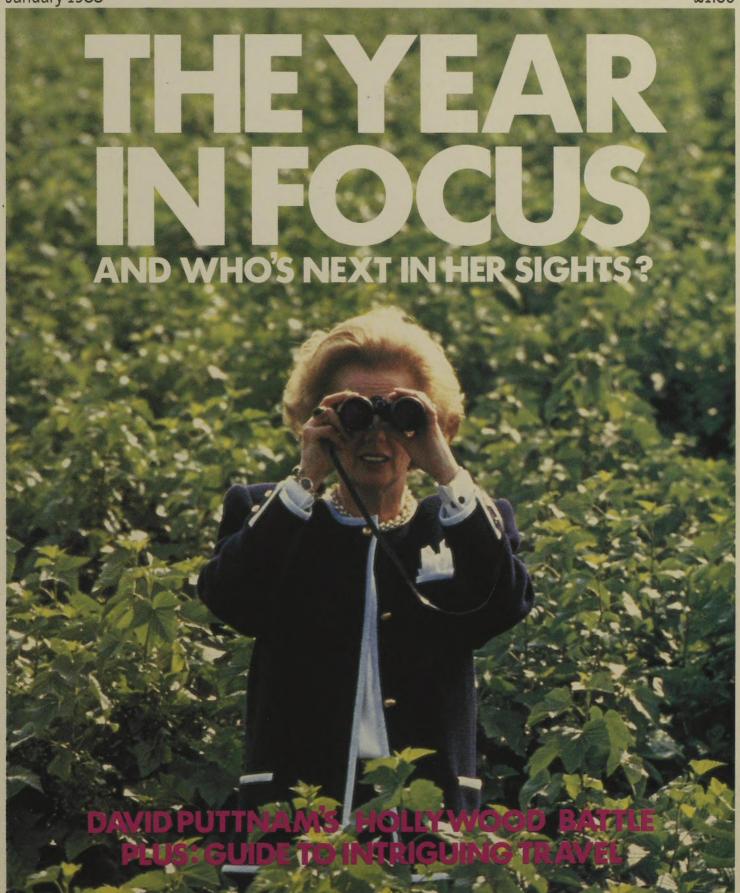


January 1988

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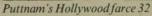
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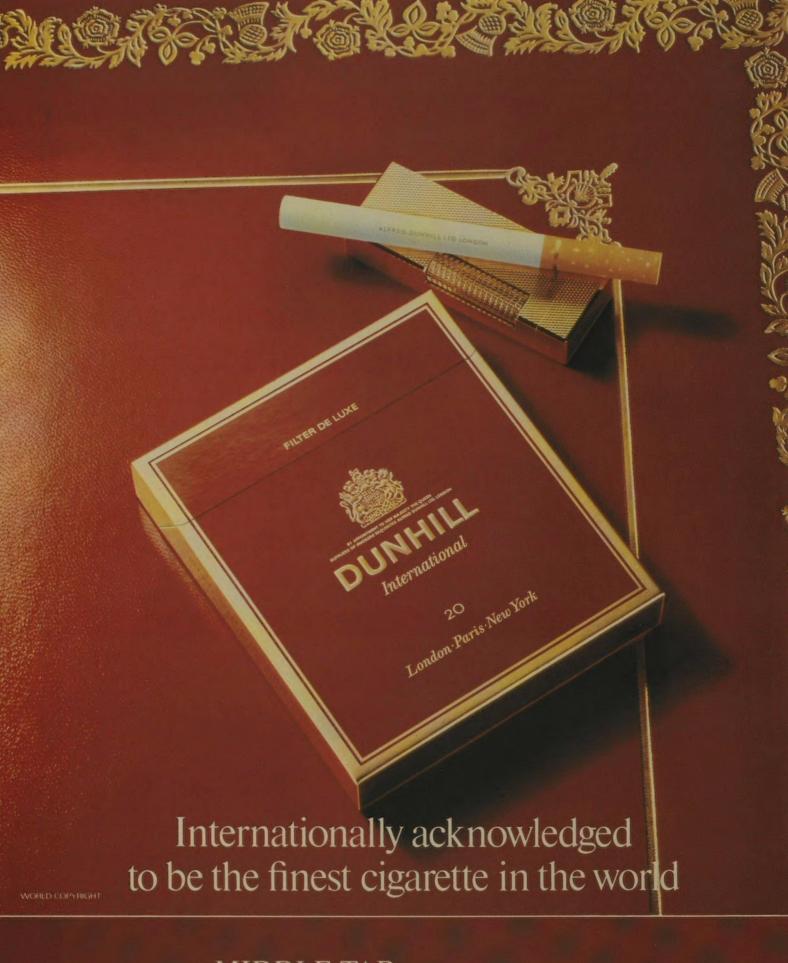


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MIDDLE TAR As defined by H.M. Government
Warning: MORE THAN 30,000 PEOPLE DIE EACH YEAR
IN THE UK FROM LUNG CANCER

Health Departments' Chief Medical Officers



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Actors and heroes

THERE IS nothing in itself wrong with an actor taking up politics and becoming president of the United States. An actor is as capable of good leadership, foresight and administration as a lawyer or general, although his curriculum vitae may not suggest this. What is wrong is when an actor relies on his stagecraft, or cinecraft as it is known in Hollywood, for the conduct of his office. It is as inappropriate as a poet entering politics and giving his speeches in verse

Ronald Reagan was not a bad actor at all, although he always favoured the parts of chummy GIs, honourable cowboys and all-American patriots. The same is true of his presidency. He has constructed for himself a succession of good roles, sometimes engaging, sometimes heroic, that were designed to appeal to the American audience. That they referred to Hollywood's output and subliminally prodded the American people's cinematic memory—the modern equivalent of folk memory—was probably an accident, but it cannot have done him any harm.

During 1987 President Reagan has had a number of bad roles forced on him and he has performed lamentably. Instead of rising to the occasion and addressing the undoubted problems of the American economy and foreign policy he has fallen back on unmemorable platitudes and that vacant charm in the hope that the American people will go on liking him. The fact is that it is not good enough to respond to allegations of incompetence and neglect that emerged during the Irangate hearings with "Oh, shucks, guys, I'll try and do better next time." It is not good enough to wait for the stock market crash before addressing the American budget deficit. (And it is not good enough to reduce the budget deficit by employing the manipulative skills of accountants.) It is not good enough to negotiate with the terrorists while pretending to take a firm line. It is not good enough to allow the Soviet Union to score continued propaganda victories.

If 1987 is remembered for anything it will be the quite remarkable decline of American influence and economic power which, because so much is invested in the office of the president, is entirely the decline of Ronald Reagan. The events of 1987 have exposed his faults and the weaknesses in the American political system. True, the administration continues to function, but during the year it became increasingly obvious that there was no motor drive at the centre, no real direction.

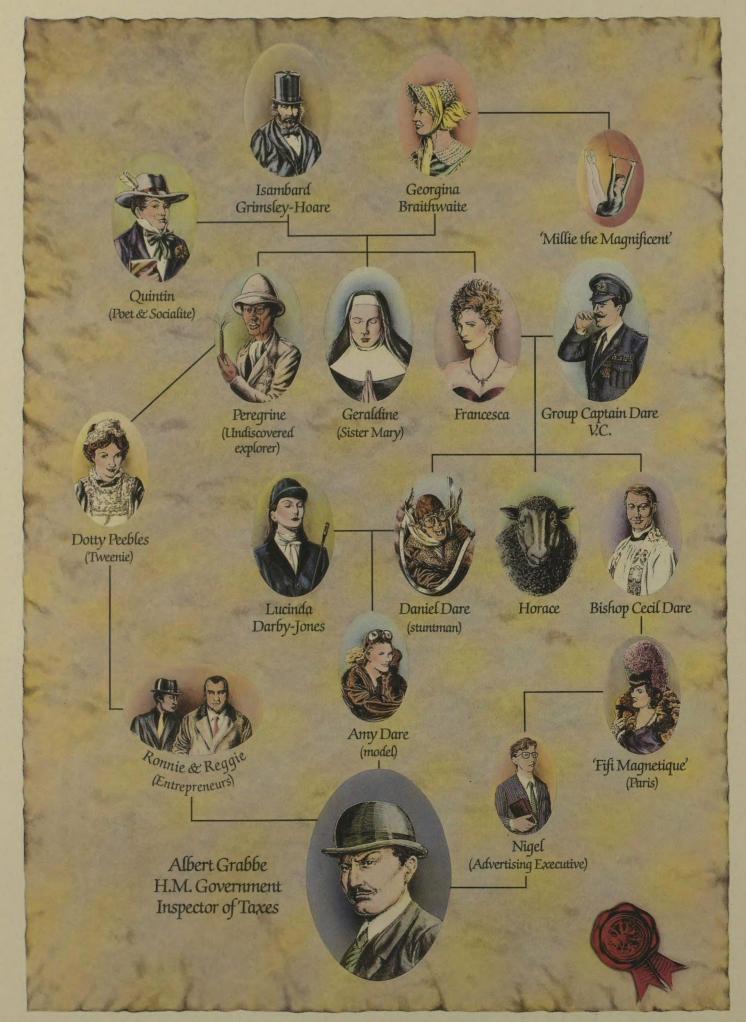
Nothing has changed intrinsically in America to make it weaker. Its resources are the same, its potential as large and the power of its industry and military undiminished. Nor, for that matter, has there been much essential change in the Soviet Union, although glasnost may offer possibilities. So, what 1987 has demonstrated is the importance of individual leadership in the superpowers. The Soviet Union has a good leader and the USA a poor

one. The fortunes of both countries are in a tangible sense reflected in the performance of their leaders. It is indeed an irony that the inflexible simplicity of President Reagan was just as responsible for the Arms Limitation Treaty as President Gorbachev's daring and imagination.

"Don't they look a scruffy bunch?" said a woman standing next to me in the small crowd that had begun to assemble outside King's Cross station. She was referring to the crew of a fire engine that had come to a temporary halt as it tried to manoeuvre through a traffic jam. I suppose they wouldn't have passed an inspection. The three crew that we could see were lolling back in their seats, smoking, their yellow fire helmets worn on the back of their heads and one who had his arm dangling from the window appeared to be flicking the ear of his colleague. I hope the woman also saw what I saw about a minute later. The engine pulled up near the entrance to the King's Cross Underground. The men disembarked and within a very short space of time all three had disappeared into the Underground station from which there were suddenly billowing clouds of smoke illuminated by the fire below. It was one of the bravest acts I have ever seen and I think we can conclude that the casual appearance of firemen does not matter when they are so uniquely casual about the dangers they take on every day.

From my window on the South Bank I have been watching the construction of a sevenstorey office block which is to be the new Daily Express building. It has risen with incredible speed. Three months ago the site was wasteland. Now the metal skeleton is complete and teeming with construction workers who trip along the metal girders with all the confidence of Russian gymnasts. This remarkable effort is made worthwhile by the difference in property prices between the old building in Fleet Street and the new building, although only five minutes' walk separate them. What is so extraordinary is that all this work, skill and investment is going into a building that is clearly going to be another ugly monolith along the Thames.

In this, the first issue of 1988, Michael Davie elegantly reaches conclusions about the momentous year we have just been through. We also examine the way in which Mrs Thatcher conducts her Cabinet and reveal the short, sharp shock that nearly a score of her ministers have received when they were dismissed. And we provide you the best in travel writing and humour. I was to name the winner of my Bill of Rights competition but the labours of processing your entries means that this will have to be delayed to next month. On the subject of prizes the British Jewellery Year competition run in the ILN Christmas Number included an incomplete clue. The Shakespeare quote came, of course, from King John



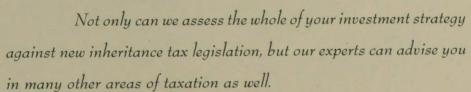
Who's NEXT IN LINE TO INHERIT THE FAMILY FORTUNE?

Will it be Uncle George? That awful Cousin Barbara? Or will the taxman inherit most of it?

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An intense fire killed 31 people and devastated parts of King's Cross Underground. A full inquiry into the disaster was adjourned until February 1

THE MONTH

FIRE HEROISM

AS THE western world seemed to move inexorably towards a recession, the focus of attention in Britain was diverted to the horrific fire on London's Underground system. It came in the wake of the shock of the Enniskillen bomb and for the second time in a fortnight cast the nation into a mood of bereavement, which was relieved by admiration for the extraordinary heroism of the fire services and the efficiency of the National Health hospitals which coped with the disaster at King's Cross. The National Health Service also came into focus with the Government's plans for reform which would put an emphasis on preventing ill health and encouraging hospitals to make profits. However, this coincided with calls for increases in nurses' pay as many hospitals are seriously understaffed. This was highlighted by the case of a baby who had a hole-in-the-heart operation postponed five times because of a shortage of nurses at Birmingham Children's Hospital.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9

• Thirty-two people were killed and 102 injured when a bomb exploded in the middle of Colombo. An outlawed Sinhalese Marxist group was suspected.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11

- The General Synod of the church voted to urge homosexual clergymen to "repent" but rejected any form of alienation or total condemnation.
- Lord Young, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, said British Airways' bid for British Caledonian would not be against the public interest. On November 20 BA offered £147 million for B Cal—£90 million less than their original offer.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

Captain Simon Hayward, the Life

Guards officer, lost his appeal in Sweden against a five-year sentence for drug smuggling. He said he would now appeal to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

- The Government said that unemployment fell in October by 118,811 to 2,751,384. The following day it was announced that inflation had risen to 4.5 per cent during the previous month.
- Miss Austria, 20-year-old Ulla Weigerstorfer, was chosen as Miss World.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

• Seven people were killed and more than 30 injured when a bomb planted in a box of chocolates exploded at the American Hospital in west Beirut.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

- Twenty-six people were killed when a DC-9 jet crashed while taking off in a snowstorm at Denver airport.
- The Department of Health said that doctors with AIDS should still be allowed to practise, providing their work does not involve blood-to-blood

contact and they accept regular supervision.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16

• Michael Grade, the BBC's director of programmes, was appointed as Channel 4's Chief Executive in succession to Jeremy Isaacs

cession to Jeremy Isaacs. TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17

• The Government said that the poll tax would be introduced in one go on April 1, 1990 except in the higher-spending areas of inner London where it would be phased in.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

• Thirty-one people died and 20 were injured as a fire swept through King's Cross Underground station.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20

 President Reagan said that the White House and congressional officials had reached an agreement to reduce the US budget deficit by \$75 million over the next two years.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

• The Football League ordered an investigation into Robert Maxwell's links with three first division clubs after



The legacy of Baby Doc Duvalier in Haiti where poverty is rife. Recent elections were brought to a violent end by the Tontons Macoutes



Beirut hostages freed: Roger Auque and Jean-Louis Normandin



Robert Maxwell bought Watford club from Elton John for £2 million

his British Printing and Communications Company bought control of Watford from Elton John for £2 million. Maxwell also has interests in Derby County, Oxford United and on December 5 the Football League abandoned moves to block the sale after Robert Maxwell agreed to end his family interests in Oxford.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22

• Glyn Davis, who was on the run after defying a court order to hand over his three daughters to his estranged wife, was shot dead by police officers as he approached a road block near Chard in Somerset armed with a pump-action shotgun.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23

- One man was killed and another wounded by police marksmen after a Securicor van was held up by an armed gang in Woolwich.
- Cuban prisoners rioted at Atlanta Federal Penitentiary and Oakdale Detention Centre in Louisiana after hearing of a US-Cuban agreement to return 2,500 "undesirables" to Cuba. Several people were injured and at least one killed as the prisoners started fires and took hostages. On November 29 all 26 hostages were released in Oakdale although 90 were still being held in Atlanta.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

• The United States and the Soviet Union said they had agreed the final details of a treaty under which they would scrap all medium- and shorterrange missiles. The treaty would be signed by President Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev in Washington on December 7.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25

- The Government announced plans to reform the health service which would include relating family doctors' pay to their performance, allowing hospitals to make profits by running businesses and treating more private patients.
- Six-week-old David Barber, whose life-saving operation for a hole in the heart was postponed five times because of staff shortages and prompted his parents to take court action, was operated on at Birmingham Children's Hospital. On December 5 the baby died after heart and lung failure.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26

- Sixteen whites were murdered by anti-government guerrillas at a mission in Esigodini, southern Zimbabwe.
- Six Israeli soldiers were killed by two Palestinians who used a hang glider to fly into an army camp at Quiryat Shemona in northern Israel. Both Palestinians were killed during the attack.
- Lord Duncan-Sandys, one of the last surviving members of Churchill's wartime cabinet, died aged 79.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27

• Dessie O'Hare, the IRA terrorist who was Ireland's most wanted man,

was captured by police and troops in County Kilkenny after a gun battle during which O'Hare was wounded.

Two French hostages, Jean-Louis Normandin, a television lighting technician, and Roger Auque, a free-lance journalist, were released after being held for more than 18 months in Beirut. Their kidnappers, the Revolutionary Justice Organization, said that their release was the result of "positive gestures" from the French government. On November 30 Wahid Gordji, an Iranian intelligence agent suspected of terrorism in France, was exchanged in Karachi for Paul Torri, the French Consul in Tehran, seized by Iran as a bargaining counter.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28

- 160 people died when a South African Airways Boeing 747 crashed into the Indian Ocean during a flight from Taipei to Johannesburg.
- England lost the first Test against Pakistan in Lahore by an innings and 87 runs.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29

- Haiti's first general election for 30 years was cancelled after gangs loyal to the former president, Jean-Claude Duvalier, rampaged through Portau-Prince killing 34 people.
- 116 people died when a Korean Airlines Boeing 707 from Baghdad to Seoul crashed in Burma.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30

Stock markets around the world fell

- again with most losing the gains they had made since "Black Monday" in October—an estimated £15.23 billion was wiped off the FT-SE index in London.
- Les Blanchisseuses by the French impressionist Degas was sold for £7.48 million at Christie's in London. The following day Picasso's Souvenir du Havre sold for £4.18 million at Sotheby's in London. Both were records for the artists.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1

• Prince Charles accused the City's post-war planners, architects and designers of having "wrecked the London skyline and descrated the dome of St Paul's". He was speaking at a dinner for the Corporation's planning committee.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3

- The Bank of England approved a cut in interest rates from 9 per cent to 8.5 per cent.
- The Government was granted a High Court injunction to stop the BBC broadcasting a radio programme, My Country Right or Wrong, involving former members of the security service.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5

● A two-day EEC summit in Copenhagen on food surpluses and fixing a budget ended in failure as the 12 leaders could not agree on a solution to the crisis ○

—SIMON HORSFORD

HIGHLIGHTS



THE COLUMN

Star-strangled news

HAVE spent an interesting few weeks monitoring the progress of Kangabonk Syndrome. It has, of course, been with us some time, but seems to be spreading alarmingly. Let me describe the symptoms. Because discerning subscribers to The Illustrated London News do not read The Star you will not have seen that paper's astonishing readers' poll concerning the Prince of Wales. The survey, which was announced on the front page, coincided with a spate of rumours (of which you, as discerning subscribers to the ILN, will be unaware) linking Charles with a lady by the name of Kanga. (That may not be her real name, but it is the name she is known by in the Press because it is short, and short names make bigger headlines. Has it ever occurred to you that not a whisper of scandal has ever attached itself to Sir Ranulph Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes?)

This poll demanded of *Star* readers their opinion on the burning issue of the day, viz, was Charles bonking Kanga? (Even though you will never have read *The Star* I assume that some of its

colloquialisms will have seeped by osmosis into your general awareness. If not, no matter.) There were two telephone numbers, one for the bonkers and one for the antibonkers. I tried one, discovered that I had muddled the numbers and found that some automatic device had thereby recorded me as being a bonker. If it is not too late, I would like to apologize to His Royal Highness and, of course, to Kanga. Not to mention Mr Kanga. Or Lord Kanga, as I think he may be.

The point of all this is really too obvious to need stating. But it is simply: how could any one of The Star's readers (assuming that neither Charles nor Kanga subscribe) have the faintest clue whether or not this couple have been up to no good together? You might just as well have a reader's poll on whether Lord Stevens, the then proprietor of The Star, picks his nose in the bath. If I had to hazard a guess, I would say the latter was rather more likely than the former. But I must emphasize that it is purely that—a guess.

I was reminded of the Star incident a week or two later when I

tuned into LBC late one evening and innocently stumbled upon a phone-in featuring Lady Lucan. The first few calls were muted and respectful. But as the programme wore on, more and more callers started displaying rampant Kangabonk Syndrome. They started cross-examining Lady Lucan about the distressing events of 13 years ago when her husband disappeared and her nanny was murdered. They started constructing their own theories. The programme ended breathtakingly with one caller accusing Lady Lucan of having murdered both the nanny and her husband. Lady Lucan was, in the circumstances, remarkably restrained.

As with all cases of Kangabonk Syndrome, the sufferers are completely undeterred by having absolutely no clue what they are talking about. There are only three people who have the remotest idea what went on that November evening in Belgravia. One is dead; one has a history of mental illness and one has never been heard of since. Policemen, lawyers and journalists have whiled away years trying to uncover the truth, and none can be said to have succeeded. So what on earth is LBC doing inviting opinions on the subject from taxi drivers in Dagenham or accountants in Acton?

The answer is that Kangabonk

Syndrome is now endemic in Western society. Newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations all thrive on kidding their readers that their views on any particular issue are worth while. You can be sure a disaster such as the King's Cross tube tragedy will have Kangabonkers rushing to the phone-ins and writing to the papers. People who have not been near an Underground station for years and who have no experience of fire-fighting or engineering will be sounding off authoritatively as to the causes. You will notice how often, when you see the word "expert" printed, it has those quotation marks around it. Or else it will be prefaced by "so-called" or "self-professed." In the land without experts the saloon-bar bore is king.

What Lady Lucan should have said to Dave from Dagenham was: "I'm sorry, but you don't know what you're talking about. I was there and you weren't. Next caller please." The phone-in would have been over in seven minutes flat. But it would have been a small blow for those involved in the fight against the Kangabonkers.

It is time that Buckingham Palace got a decent PR outfit. The suggestion is not as flippant as it sounds. The more or less open warfare between Press and Palace is one thing. But, as the latest polls make all too clear, the monarchy seems to be coming off worst at the moment.

A recent survey by Mori showed that only 63 per cent of the British public think the country would be worse off without the monarchy—a drop of 10 per cent since last February. The number of people who believe the abolition of the monarchy would make no difference to the country has risen from 20 per cent to 29 per cent in the same period.

The image that has been projected hitherto is of a couple of long-suffering parents surrounded by spoilt-brat hangers-on, idlers and drifters, who quarrel, clown around in public and drive too fast. It is doubtless an unfair perception, but there you are.

The Palace's present policy towards the media appears to be a rather pessimistic lunge at containment. The press office is briskly unforthcoming at best: snootily disdainful at worst. I am not talking about inquiries concerning the proportions of Fergie's bottom or the precise number of words spoken by Charles to Di in the last 33 days. These are quite properly stonewalled. The problem is a hopeless lack of professionalism in presenting the public functions of the royal family.

Spend any time covering the royals and you soon discover that official trips and tours are treated almost exclusively as photo opportunities. Thus are the prey required to don silly hats, test-drive silly vehicles and engage in silly stunts. It is all gratefully recorded by the Nikon brigade who occasionally reap the further bonus of a frisky wind blowing naughty gusts up Diana's skirt.

The writers, meanwhile, are cordoned off and quietly ignored. Days will go by on a foreign tour and the only information they will be given is a description of the Princess of Wales's clothes. The result is that they, too, end up praying for a frisky wind to do the business with Diana's dress. Got

to have something to write about. Prince Charles's recent visit to the Moss Side area of Manchester was a pretty good example of the uninspired handling of the Press. His first stop off was at the Royal Brewery. Why was he visiting a

the road in Moss Lane West. Why should the Prince of Wales be opening small restaurants in Manchester suburbs? No one thought to tell anyone.

Of course, there were ways of finding answers to these questions.



brewery? No one told the Press.

Next, he visited a building site which the schedule informed us was the Moss Care Housing Project. Why was he visiting a building site? No one knew.

He moved on to the West Indian Sports and Social Club. Here he apparently delivered a speech. A woman from Business in the Community handed out a five-paragraph statement which she claimed was the speech being delivered by the Prince. Reporters checked with a woman from the Central Office of Information who was in charge of the Press for the day. Was this Prince Charles's speech? She sniggered and said she could not confirm or deny it. The Prince ended up at a brand new Afro-Caribbean restaurant down

One could ring up the brewery and ask. One could hang about the gate to the building site and pigeonhole one of the directors of the building contractors. One could knock on the door of the restaurant and ask for a quick word with the proprietor. But it is a regrettable fact, recognized by nearly every corporate concern that has dealings with the media, that reporters tend to be both pushed for time and lazy. It would not have taken much effort for a PR firm to have produced a briefing pack that would have explained the Prince's interest in the places he visited. Eventually the message might sink in that Charles is not simply a solitary mystic with a loony liking for confiding in cauliflowers.



I rang up one top PR man, Trevor Morris, managing director of the Quentin Bell Organization, to see if he agreed. He did, "I think the royal family does have a problem with its image at the moment," he said. "I'm not sure they've got a very clear idea of the image they are trying to project. Even if you are royal the old rule applies: it's not simply being famous that matters; it's what you're famous for. Someone like Prince Charles should set out clearly what he is trying to achieve and then keep repeating it." The Palace should try. It could hardly get a worse press than at present.

The advertisement lies in front of me, both exciting and depressing. I know in my heart that I want what it is trying to sell me. But I must also come to terms with what that says about me. Let me be perfectly straight about this, and, please, no giggles. The advert is for a Corby trouser press. You ask how old I am? I am only 33. Precisely.

Oh, the advertisement does its best. Leaning casually against the fantasy object is a shiny saxophone. Sandwiched in the press is a pair of trendy trousers. There is an equally trendy jacket on the jacket hanger so thoughtfully incorporated in the design (along with the automatic heater timer). The advertising copy is very snappy. But let us not kid ourselves. Jazz saxophonists with trendy trousers do not own Corby trouser presses. They fling their rumpled trousers on the floors of their trendy Soho flats as they tumble into their rumpled beds with the rumpled lead vocals. There is not a knife-edge crease in the place. And you know as well as I do the sort of person who owns a Corby trouser press. A boring sort of person. A person with a boring grey suit which he wears every day to his boring grey job.

It is no good me protesting that I do not wear boring grey suits or go to a boring grey job. That I wear rather smart Italian corduroys and that, really, the only reason to buy a Corby trouser press is that it would save having to climb upstairs every second morning and run an iron over them in order to keep the trendy pleats in place. And, that no matter how carefully you aim, you always end up ironing a pleat where there should not be a pleat.

The truth of the matter is that wanting a Corby trouser press is the first, indisputable sign of beckoning middle age. I do not shrink from the truth. But I cannot pretend it makes me happy \bigcirc

—ALAN RUSBRIDGER



Over-the-top: Roy Ackerman, chef and restaurateur with a large appetite for lavish things. "Live to eat," he says, "don't eat to live"

PROFILE

Roly-poly prodigy

AS THE most genial face of a greedy decade, it is not surprising that cooks have become the media superstars of the 1980s. Surfing along on this tidal wave of saliva is the portly figure of Roy Ackerman. Born in 1943, the son of a Bristol removals man and a "virtually unknown" mother, he has risen through the kitchen hierarchy from chef de commis to become president of the Restaurateurs' Association of Great Britain (effecting a popular change in restaurant licensing laws last year), deputy chairman of Kennedy Brookes the multi-million pound catering firm and presenter of his own television series on food, to be shown this year.

"Catering has always had an awful image problem," he agrees. "I came from a working-class family, probably of Middle European origin, but even so it wasn't an easy trade. I'm probably too thick-skinned to realize when I've been sneered at; one of the things about starting at the bottom is that you've got nothing to lose."

It would take a brave man, or a silly one, to attempt to put Roy Ackerman down, let alone lift him up. Six feet tall, bearded and built like a sumo wrestler—complete with pony-tail-he is, in every sense, larger than life. To start with, there is the ebullient highbohemian Ackerman lifestyle. He and his pretty, 27-year-old, convent-educated girlfriend Sally live in a converted garage off Fulham Road. Once inside its unprepossessing gates, you enter a vast open-plan opera set stuffed with glass-fibre statues, huge, glowing paintings, baroque furniture, high technology and swirling Verdi. "I like soft, big, flowery, over-the-top productions," he says in a muted bellow over *La traviata*. "Maybe I lack originality, but I get most fun out of re-creating the past.'

The story of Ackerman's rise in the world should, perhaps, be attributed to another Verdi opera, La forza del destino, for he is something of a mysterious prodigy in the eyes of friends and colleagues. "If I knew how he managed to manipulate people, and had his energy, I'd be equally successful," says Chelsea Arts Club owner Dudley Winterbottom, with whom Ackerman revived the Arts Club Ball.

After an unhappy and peripatetic childhood, which he has

largely "blotted out" in memory, Roy Ackerman left school in Brighton at 14 to work in the kitchen of a big (now defunct) hotel. Here he discovered the twin passions in his life: food and cooking. "My philosophy is, live to eat, don't eat to live," he says, After working his way up from vegetables to pâtisserie, he teamed up with two old hands in the catering trade, and for the next seven years the trio rolled around Britain and Europe as freelances.

By the age of 18 he had learnt to think on his feet. He fitted in a formal apprenticeship, then took a degree in Training Administration and Policy at Bath University in 1967. Soon after, he joined "a lovely 25 stone film star called George Silver", as director of Silver's company, Banquets of Oxford. Seven years later he finally took the plunge and started up his ownrestaurant there—Quincey's.

The restaurant was a success. Within three years his catering company, Alfresco Feasts, was able not only to pay back the loan on Quincey's but buy three more restaurants. By that time, however, his marriage to Chris, a graphic artist by whom Ackerman has an 18-year-old son, Marcus, had "gone by the board".

"For many years Roy lived like a tramp," says Dudley Winterbottom, then running the Cherwell Boathouse, who met him at this time. "He had me really worried until I realized that for one thing there was room for both of us, and for another he was bigger and bolder than I'd ever be."

In fact, Ackerman was becoming very frustrated with simply running four restaurants, and wanted to "expand onto a wider canvas. However, I couldn't find the backing, so I asked the advice of a financial wizard called Michael Golder, with whom I'd worked before in a company called Lindley Catering Investments. His advice was, 'merge your company with mine (Kennedy Brookes), and we'll find the capital to open other restaurants, then go public'. It sounded great. So we did it.'

That was in 1980, at the start of the catering boom; but it was still a risk many would have hesitated to take. "I've never been frightened of losing money, I'm not conscious of it in that respect, though I am cautious," Ackerman says. "If I lost it all, I could go back to a very modest way of life." It is difficult not to be sceptical about this, for the decor in his home is clearly that of someone with a sensuous love of beauty.

Kennedy Brookes did not overstretch itself; with Ackerman providing the inspiration and Golder the perspiration, its turnover figures went from £1 million to £100 million in seven years. On

the way it picked up the concession for places like Silverstone, Farnborough and the Henley Festival, plus the Wheeler's chain, the Mario & Franco group, Maxim's, the lease on the Trocadero, the London Pavilion and, most recently, the Londonderry Hotel in Park Lane.

Despite such rapacity, and a restaurant guide published in 1987 which is lavish in its praise of his own restaurants, Roy Ackerman remains popular in the industry. "Roy's gentle, kind, generous and endlessly encouraging to the young," says Prue Leith.

"He has a roly-poly bonhomie that carries him on to the next thing," adds Roger Gough the poet. "I went to a crazy dinner at his house where we were up to our knees in crayfish. He isn't pretentious, just loves good things. I sit down and warm myself by him."

The dinner parties, at which you are likely to have Joanna Lumley and Lord Montagu of Beaulieu on one hand and the brothers who make his mock-baroque statues on the other, are undoubtedly one reason for Ackerman's popularity; his revival of the Chelsea Arts Ball is another.

The ball was moribund since 1959; the idea for its revival came from Dudley Winterbottom, but he soon realized it was too big an enterprise to take on alone. "I didn't have the muscle to take on the Albert Hall, which has all sorts of restrictions and requirements like using their own caterers. Roy did, and hoovered up the contract as a result," says Winterbottom.

Dressed in his David Chamberlain suits and possessed of a chauffeur-driven Mercedes complete with car-phone, Ackerman is the epitome of the 60s man made good. "I divide the world into hosts and guests," he says, between telephone calls, as we crawl through the traffic. "I'm better at being a host.'

In spite of its rapid growth, it is unlikely that Kennedy Brookes will become a serious rival to the Trusthouse Forte chain, though rumours abound that they are poised to bid for the Ritz next. "Trusthouse Forte is a family dynasty; this isn't," Ackerman says. "I'd quite like Marcus to follow me in the business." Then, perhaps, the Ackerman joie de vivre will continue to flourish O

-AMANDA CRAIG Amanda Craig is winner of the 1987 Catherine Pakenham award for women writers under 30 and writes for the Sunday Express



Chelsea Arts Club Ball in the 1920s with a giant cake on wheels

PARTIES

When the ball rolls

IT WILL BE the night no one cares who is seen with whom, as into the early hours they dance their cares away. Holly Johnson finds himself a novel friend, greedy Christopher Biggins gets himself two portions of jolly heiress Francesca Thyssen and royal frockmaker Elizabeth Emanuel.

Clement Freud sits in a pinkish suit with a top hat—"It was topping fun with a pedigree chum"—while the great ballerina Natalia Makarova will lose her earring and offer to dance with anyone who finds it for her.

The aristocracy will be well represented, with one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting, not to mention the Hon Emily Young, daughter of Lord Kennet, who will be busy being outrageously buxom on top of a dining table (and, as she will point out, there will be other Hons present, this time serving on table, among the 500 people employed by the Chelsea Arts Ball). Actual members of the Chelsea Arts Club will step out of the pages of history, or will it be the woodwork?

Actress-model, Katie Rabett, Prince Andrew's former friend, with Kit Harvey looking terribly camp La Dolce Vita style, might hitch up her fairy-tale ball-gown and give the Hooray Henrys at the charity do a generous sight of her see-through slip and suspenders, and both will be seen confessing to the bishop in residence, Christopher Biggins.

Mickey Mouse and a very pregnant Cleopatra will be spotted among the merrymakers. Nature's part will be taken by a generously designed woman of middle years who will sit grandly naked from the waist up. Stars of stage and screen will be found mingling happily with lesser mortals and it will be fun spotting who's behind the Edwardian costumes and masks this year. Whoever they are,

-PATRICK HUGHES

This year's Chelsea Arts Ball will be at the Café Royal on Friday, January 29. There are to be 2,000 revellers, paying £75 each (discount for club members), which includes dinner, dancing, all entertainments, but not drink. Tickets from Tadema Studios, 35 Tadema Road, London SW10 0PY (352 2523)

one thing's for sure, they won't be

short of a few lire

London 100 years ago: from the ILN, January 14, 1888

LADIES CLUBS do not seem to accommodation of their work-asucceed. The poor little "Somerville" has at length, I learn, given up the ghost. It was hardly a club, in the true sense, the subscription being absurdly small, and the accommodation consisting of only one or two rooms over a shop in Oxford Street; but it began operations some few years ago with a considerable flourish of trumpets. There were to be 1,000 members, the majority of whom were to be well-to-do-women, who were to pay their annual subscription of five shillings, without expecting any benefit themselves,

day sisters. The semi-charitable and low-pitched scheme always seemed foredoomed to failure . . .

The Albemarle, a mixed club for ladies and gentlemen, continues a sober course of being; but another smarter and more luxurious mixed club near Regent Circus came signally to grief. So did the only two other clubs for ladies solely of which I have known . . . I have asked a high authority on clubland customs why ladies' clubs have never yet succeeded, and he replies that it is because women are too temperate—they neither eat but contributing toward the expensively enough nor drink wine

enough to make their clubs rich; nor do they smoke or play billiards! If these be essentials to the success of a club, long may it be ere one for women shall flourish! Yet I cannot but think that a thoroughly well-fitted and sensibly-conducted club for ladies, located somewhere near Regent Circus, would pay...

It must, of course, be kept reasonably select; but there must be no nonsense of any sort about it, and no taint of eleemosynary aid. It would then be a great comfort and convenience to a large number of ladies.

-FLORENCE FENWICK-MILLER





Strip cartoons from The Magician's Wife, one of the new-wave adult comics from Titan Books

PUBLISHING

Comics for grown-up readers

COMICS in this country are associated with fond memories of Dennis the Menace doing his best to avoid a whacking. Not the most sophisticated of media, but then they have no need to be, produced as they are for the juvenile and uncritical. Now adult-aimed comics are being produced with much more ambitious intentions.

What is remarkable about this comic revolution is that much of the impetus is coming from England, one of the few countries without a rich tradition of this kind of material. In Europe, for example, every age group is catered for—there are specific comics for children, for teenagers and for adults. In Japan, one adult

title alone sells two million a week. It is clearly a major area of publishing which has been largely ignored here.

Last year a clutch of artists and writers decided to break out from some of the long-standing constraints on the comic form. Foremost among them was writer Alan Moore, who together with illustrator Ian Gibson created the astonishing Watchmen series, now published as one book by Titan Books. Although set firmly in the traditions of the Marvel comics, Moore's Watchmen super-heroes are not the one-dimensional beefcakes of old but realistic and human characters involved in story-lines that have both contemporary relevance and moral complexity. Moore's characters might still be dressed in silly costumes, but when he starts quoting Jung and Nietzsche you know something different is going on.

This radical rethink of a comic's limitations immediately found a huge audience—Watchmen shot to the top of the comics' charts and earned Moore the moniker "the comic world's first mega-star". It has given him the freedom for his next project to tackle one of the most sacred icons of comic mythology, Batman. How the heroes of Gotham City will be treated in his forthcoming Killing Joke is anybody's guess.

Other writers within the

industry are taking things a stage further. To quote Moore, "There's potentially more to adult comics than supermen with their underpants on the outside"; indeed some writers are exploring the possibilities of genuine genre fiction within the comic-book format.

Two to watch out for are Violent Cases by Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean, a richly-textured tale of Chicago gangsters told in flashback, and The Magician's Wife by Charyn and Boucq, which blends eroticism and surrealism in the story of a magician and a female werewolf. In these hands a comic has the same range of possibilities as any other media.

Inevitably the video-nasty element is beginning to appear in order to cash in. Rank Xerox, a translation from an Italian comic, is a particularly unpleasant example of this. The eponymous hero (half-man, half-photocopier) indulges in a series of sordid sexual adventures which are interspersed with bouts of gratuitous violence. While the Watchmen destroy preconceptions, Rank Xerox merely destroys.

It is a crucial time for the comics industry, anxious not to see its hard-won and fragile credibility shattered by a few low-grade comic-nasties. They recognize that any repetition of the furore surrounding the imposition of the Comics Code in America in the 1950s, where every publication was rated according to its contents, could suffocate all that is talented and good about the new wave over here \bigcirc

—CHRIS RILEY

Strip tease for opera

THE COMIC is now set to infiltrate the world of opera. Latest in a series of measures designed to make what Dr Johnson called "an exotic and irrational entertainment" accessible to a wider audience is the publication of strip cartoon versions of four of the most popular works in the repertory: Bizet's Carmen, Puccini's Madam Butterfly, The Magic Flute by Mozart and The Flying Dutchman by Wagner. New and sometimes quite racy translations of the libretti provide the story line, and the large format (10 by 11 inches) allows for some dramatic illustrations,

Different artists were engaged

for the first four books, each of which posed different problems, and the results are varyingly successful. It was an obvious temptation to choose a style which is a pastiche of a traditional Japanese print for Madam Butterfly, though it distances the work from its 20th-century setting. The Magic Flute is drawn very much like a children's fairy tale, which in many ways it resembles, but the problem was to get in the considerable amount of dialogue which is essential to the story and not always easy to follow in the layout of the pictures and the speech bubbles. The Flying Dutchman captures the drama and the

doom-laden atmosphere of the legend on which Wagner based his opera, while *Carmen* is closest to the contemporary comic with its sex-kitten heroine and crudely-drawn characters.

These opera comics are not aimed at the purist or the regular operagoer, as Susan Pinkus of the publishers, Pagoda Books, explained, "but at a new audience, with a view to debunking the idea that opera is élitist". This sentiment echoes current policy at the Royal Opera House, which was approached for advice and subsequently lent its name and practical support to the venture. The company's publications editor, John McMurray, thinks the books will appeal to people who have enjoyed opera in the cinema or on television, and that they could be

of interest to someone who hears perhaps an aria from *Carmen* or *Madam Butterfly* on the radio and wants to find out more about the rest of the opera. He is already at work on *Aida*, *La Bohème*, *Boris Godunov* and *The Barber of Seville*, which are due for publication later this year in a planned series of up to 36 titles.

The books are part of a larger plan at the Royal Opera to attract a new audience. One stage has been the introduction of subtitles—potted translations of the words being sung—which are projected above the stage; and last June a performance of *La Bohème* starring Placido Domingo was shown on a huge screen in the Covent Garden piazza where it could be enjoyed by passers-by \bigcirc

-MARGARET DAVIES





Hals Pals dolls: for children who are not masters of their own universe

CHILDREN

Toys for troubled tots

THE TOY industry has come in for some bad press lately. The Masters of the Universe range of dolls, for example, was particularly singled out in the run-up to Christmas for encouraging violence among children: the frightening war-weapons and the amoral attitudes expressed in the packaging were deemed by some to be harmful to a child's mental

development. It is a complaint which has also been levelled at several other types of "action men" over the years. But in an atmosphere of such hostility it is easy to overlook other dolls which are socially useful.

Hal's Pals are a remarkable idea just introduced into this country from America. They are dolls designed specifically with disabled

children in mind and come complete not with tanks and ray-guns but with wheelchairs, white sticks and hearing aids. They represent a toy with which the handicapped can identify—a pal who has the same disabilities as themselves. Marking as they do a new sensitivity to this previously ignored market among toy manufacturers, creator Susan Anderson has this to say: "They are important psychological tools in the growing campaign against exclusion, discrimination and prejudice against the disabled." Already a great success in the US, the Pals look set to make a similar impact here.

But this is not the only idea in health care that is recognizing the psychological worth of cuddly companions. In several London hospitals, for instance, dolls and teddy bears are often used to explain to a child what a particular illness or operation involves. Although there have been problems (at Great Ormond Street an experiment using a doll which came apart to show internal organs was abandoned for being too horrific), a growing number of doctors now believe that treating the child's favourite toy in just the same way as the child himself can have a comforting effect.

If a child is having an operation, the teddy will be taken into the theatre and stitched up and bandaged in the same way as the patient—the dressing to be removed simultaneously with the child's when the time comes. In this way anxiety is allayed and the child goes through the often traumatic experience of surgery with a "friend". The psychology is in many ways the same as for Hal's Pals—the infant has someone to identify with.

It has taken a long time for the decision-makers of the toy industry to realize that some children are not masters of their universe. Inventive surgeons have been more sensitive and are achieving much with a simple and more pragmatic view of a child's relationship with its toys. Indeed, as any child knows, a doll is not just a bundle of fluff, plastic and grown-up preconceptions, but is real-a friend and confidante. And just like a real person why shouldn't it be disabled or get ill sometimes? O

-ROGER SABIN

Hals Pals retail information from Nottingham Rehab (0602 234251)

HEALTH

Crisis in London

HEALTH ministers from all over the world will meet in London at the end of this month (January 26-28) to try to devise a means of controlling AIDS. The meeting takes place against a background of concern about AIDS problems in Africa where there are few facilities for testing blood and minimal education programmes. Some 10 million people are thought to be infected but this is only the very roughest of estimates. In Uganda, for example, 17 per cent of the population is recognized as being infected, but the figure may be as high as 30 per cent.

Aside from the medical and educational aspects of AIDS, the conference will also be addressing itself to the likely economic and social effects. Dr Jonathan Mann of the World Health Organization AIDS programme, who is organizing the London summit, predicts that "the impact of AIDS has the potential for economic disaster and destabilization of some of the countries involved".

The main difficulty that will affect discussion is the problem of magnitude. What number, for instance, will the British National Health service be expected to cope with by the turn of the century? There are perhaps 600,000 people carrying the virus in Britain. How many more people will they infect? Will the problem be limited to the recognized risk groups?

At present homosexual men account for most cases of AIDS in Britain. Almost 1,000 bisexual and homosexual men have been diagnosed as HIV positive and 500 have already died. Only 15 heterosexuals are known to have caught the disease in Britain. A further 49 have been infected after the use of dirty needles.

One of the ways of estimating progress of the virus is to monitor the incidence of other sexually transmitted diseases. There is a decline in both Europe and America which suggests that the message about safer sex is getting through. In Britain this is most certainly true since a Department of Health survey shows that the average number of partners taken by homosexual men per year has decreased from 10.5 to 4.7.

But health officials are not optimistic. The virus is already

loose in the population. The number of homosexual men contracting the disease is doubling every 11 months and recent estimates suggest that heterosexuals will face the same risks by the end of the century. An alternative view is that AIDS will be restricted to the groups whose health is already compromised by their poverty, lifestyle and sexual proclivities.

On the medical front the conference will hear little of a positive nature. As each mystery of the virus is solved another more impenetrable mystery appears. Although the scientific ingenuity and effort deployed on AIDS is more concentrated than any single medical problem since the war, there is still little hope of a successful vaccine being developed in the next five years.

So for the present the World Health Organization is developing a global strategy of education campaigns that will be the main subject for debate at the conference. At the same time the delegates will be keen to resist the calls for strict imposition of quarantine and compulsory blood tests that are coming from some countries O

—OLIVER GILLIE

Global crisis: health ministers will call for international co-operation



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87: A YEAR IN REVIEW





OF ALL the memorable images of 1987-Mrs Thatcher's grim bearing in the rain at the postponed Remembrance Day Service at Enniskillen, or President Reagan's jaunty bearing after the Crash when he described the American economy as "sound", or Fawn Hall's blank all-American self-rightcourness when she told the US Senate "Irangate" has more staying power than the sight of a Los Angeles television newsreader plunging under his desk in mid-bulletin because he thought he was about to be buried by an earthquake.

As the year ends, innocent bystanders of the world economy are also cowering under their desks. It, too, has a San Andreas fault, and bystanders are as rightly scared as the newsman. The Great Crash was the principal landmark of 1987. No more unheralded event has occurred in recent times. Gore Vidal was asked if he had been wiped out. "Wiped out? I doubled my fortune," he replied. He was one of the lucky few who could joke about it without being masochistic: he, Sir James Goldsmith and the poor.

Even months later the figures make the blood run cold. On October 16, a Friday, the following Monday-Black or Meltdown Monday as it was soon called-Wall Street crashed, the result of a sudden and frightening loss of confidence. On that single day the market suffered a massive fall of 508.32 points, or 22.6 per cent. Financial wealth of the order end of the week, share prices were down by nearly £102 billion. In Hong Kong the Stock Exchange shut for four days. In Australia the market fell by 52 per cent. Something fundamental had gone awry. But the experts could not agree even on the nature of the crisis. What provoked the sudden loss of faith? Nobody knew then, and nobody knows now.

cit was the principal scapegoat. There were runners-up. One of them was "speculators" capitalism", the pursuit of short-term profits. Another was the international link-up of computers-a seductive notion, since it suggested that runaway technology, not the human brain, or greed, or ignorance, or miseconomic theories had been the lodestar of both Mrs Thatcher and President Reagan, Professor Milton Friedman, pointed to a simple fact. The deficit had existed for many months, he said, yet the market had gone

AMERICA STRIKES BACK

A US destroyer draws away after a successful strike against a disused oil platform in the Gulf which the Iranians had been using as a base to attack shipping. This sparring in the Gulf embroiled America in a confrontation which is still unresolved

higher and higher. Friedman added that for his part he had no idea why the crash had occurred when it did

So the innocent bystander is wise to remain on all fours. After all, an exceptionally shrewd operator on the world markets. Mr Holmes à Court, did not foresee the crash. He lost \$1 billion. The bystander has not yet seen any answer to the simple-sounding conundrum

On that day

financial wealth

of the order of

\$500 billion

disappeared

height of the crisis: "If there are panic sellers, who are the panic buyers?" He knows that the experts cannot begin to tell whether in the coming months the world economy will stabilize or slump into recession.

These were the most striking of the events of 1987 that could continue to shake the world in 1988. They came like a deluge of cold water to a

Britain that has been obsessed by money rather cerned solely with interest rates. The BBC than by the real economy. Until the crash, it had been the year of the £1 million salary, of the overnight windfall from privatized shares, of the 23-year-old yuppic Porsche-owner with the Filofax. It was characteristic that one of the few attacks on this post-Big Bang society, Caryl Churchill's play Serious Money, became a fashionable hit with the very people it set out to criticize. The symbolic figure of the year was the schoolboy who ran up debts of £100,000 with his broker, whom he used to phone in his school lunch break. The brokers, when their client's age was revealed, explained feebly that they had been deceived because he knew the jargon. This year's further acts of privatization took the proportion of the population owning shares to 20 per cent (it was 7 per cent in 1979). and until October none of them had reason to complain. After Black Monday, however, wits were saying that sharepushers' advertisements should be required to warn buyers that "shares can go up as well as down'

Even some of the most painful events of the year turned on cash. The Zeebrugge ferry tragedy was caused by the owners' preference for profitable open deck space instead of watertight bulkheads. The unions, at least, thought that the King's Cross fire would have been a lesser disaster if London Transport had not economized on staff. The longest-running legal battle of the year, starring the secretary of the Cabinet, Sir Robert Armstrong, had at its roots the bitterness felt by the author of Snycatcher, Peter Wright, because he had been denied a decent pension. Jeffrey Archer's libel action against The Star newspaper made history of a sort not only because Mrs Archer caused the judge to become over-excited, but because Archer won record damages of £500,000. Lester Piggott, before his final appearance in court, anxiously asked a friend: "They wouldn't send a living legend to the slammer, would they?" But they would, and did, for cheating the Inland Revenue out of £3.25 million. Even in the literary world the biggest stir was caused not by a book but by a contract: Michael Holroyd's £625,000 advance for a biography of George Bernard Shaw. That, in turn, would not have happened if publishers Chatto & Windus, the successful bidders, had not just been bought by the "media magnate" brothers, Si and Don Newhouse, who control the biggest private fortune in the United States: \$7.5 billion

Similarly the art world was dominated not represented by the meteor from New Zealand, by contemporary paintings but by what all prices: £30 million for a van Gogh. At Oxford the election of a new Chancellor was fought partly on the capacity of the candidates for fund-raising; the manifesto written by Edward Heath's faction boasted of the sums he had raised for the Balliol organ. Not only the posed by the humorist Miles Kington at the universities but most of the nation's leading

galleries, museums, libraries. orchestras and theatres were compelled to spend their time thinking less about their purposes than about attracting sponsors. Lloyds Bank sponsored the Royal Academy's exhibition (the best of the year) of The Age of Chivalry, the credit boom would realize

that the bank was not consought to solve its problems by appointing an accountant as its new director-general, a decision that would have horrified Lord Reith Sir William Haley, or Sir Huw Wheldon. Sport was more and more dominated by money. Test matches were overwhelmed by one-day matches. The return of Joe Bugner to the sweet science, though concluded by the size of his belly, was stimulated by the size of his purse. The very structure of the Football League was threatened when Robert Maxwell tried to buy his third first-division club

Some said that the national infatuation with money was caused by Mrs Thatcher. Certainly the general election, which was over before it began, turned on money. Suppose she had yielded to those who expected the economy would be in better shape in the autumn than in June, and had called an election for, say, Thursday, October 22? As it was, she ended 1987 with a tighter grip on power than any Prime Minister since Churchill in the last years of the war-unchallenged in the country and the party. She was also unchallenged in Cabinet, if only because its collective opinion, from

all accounts, was rarely sought. Nor had she run out of steam, as some had predicted earlier in the year that she would. The Queen's Speech announced a formidable programme for turning the country upside down. particularly rates and education, with another snip at the trade unions' wings for old times' sake. The Prime Minister was more confident than ever and, as all could see, looking younger. Only when confronted with the nation's growing violence, both criminal and random, as in the Hungerford killings, did she seem at a loss for a remedy.

Everyone had to adjust to Mrs Thatcher's triumph. In Labour-controlled cities, the talk was of Labour co-operating with private enterprise, as in Coventry, not of going it alone. The Labour Party told itself it had fought a fine campaign, but the fact was that it lost, and lost in an even more depressing fashion than in 1983. The year saw the beginnings of an argument that will continue until the next election: should Labour concentrate on getting out its traditional vote, by sticking to its traditional policies? Or should it adjust its policies to the new council-house-buying, share-owning members of the working class who have prospered in Thatcher's Britain? The new party image that Kinnock seemed to favour was

Brian Gould MP, calm and sharply dressed. who spoke of socialism and share-holding in the same breath. Did 1987 mark the end of socialism? Certainly the year ended with the socialists in retreat, and not only in Britain. The Australian Labor Party was re-elected for the third time running, and the Prime Minister. Bob Hawke, never mentioned the word socialism during the entire campaign. In China the rejuvenated party leadership endorsed private profit as a laudable goal.

Mrs Thatcher aimed at the destruction of the left. She achieved the destruction of the centre, or perhaps it destroyed itself. Members of the centre blamed their eclipse on the electoral system, which gave the Alliance only 25 seats in return for a quarter of the votes. But its troubles went deeper. Nobody knew what the centre stood for, not even-or especially-its leaders Was it for or against privatization, for example? Much was made of the "social market", which turned out to mean making the nation richer so that everyone could share the benefits, an idea that anyone, left, right, or centre could agree on. Dr David Owen and his supporters, when bitter rows about merging with the Liberals split the SDP after the election, insisted that serious political principles were involved. Nobody else saw anything involved except the

Did 1987 also mark the end of trade union power as it has existed in Britain since the war? Arthur Scargill had been almost forgotten by the nation at large before he popped up in the as with the National Coal Board. The defeat of

French traders watch anxiously as the world



finally called off in February-proved where the industrial muscle now lay, helped by Thatcherite legislation.

Never had the TUC seemed less powerful. It was not the only British institution under strain. The MCC, the judiciary, the police, the Jockey Club, the Coldstream Guards and the Church of England all had a bad year. So did the monarchy, thanks to the standards of tabloid press journalism set by

Rupert Murdoch. Nor was it a good year for experts, quite apart from the economists. The weather forecasters failed to notice the approach of a hurricane. The advertising experts who ran the government's Aids campaign, according to those working in the field, alarmed the public without dispelling their

ignorance. Specialists dealing with a new national concern, child abuse, turned out to be

The dominance of Mrs Thatcher in Britain was helped by the decline of Reagan in the United States. By the use of mirrors, she appeared to be an important figure on the world stage, flying to Moscow to gain Gorbachev's help in winning the election (gladly given), and to Washington to tell Reagan to cheer up after Irangate.

The decline of Reagan was no joke, though many jokes were made about it. For seven years defenders of the United States, though not necessarily of Reagan, had been telling

the print unions at Wapping-the pickets were those who held him in contempt that their view was uninformed. He was neither a fool nor senile. 1987 was the year when the scoffers could say they were right all along, and Atlanticists began to worry about the prospects for the western alliance in 1988, with such an accident-prone and uncertain leader. Reagan was strongly censured by the Senate "Irangate" Committee. Two of his appointments to the Supreme Court were humiliatingly rejected.

As US leadership

became more

halting, Russian

leadership

became bolder

Friends of his went on trial, one of them revealed to have been an alcoholic even while at Reagan's side in the White House. By the end of the year former supporters were admitting that he had presided over a contraction of US influence and, according to Sir William Rees-Mogg, over the permanent eclipse of the almighty dollar as well.

Irangate had its good side. The tarnishing of Reagan's domestic record made both him and, t was reported, his wife, highly anxious to improve his rating in the history books by an act of international statesmanship. This ambition coincided with what appeared to be a similar need on Gorbachev's part. As US leadership became more halting, with the European allies disinclined to support US policies fully either in Central America or in the Gulf. Russian leadership became bolder. Gorbachev was the first Russian leader since the revolution whom the western public felt they might be able to understand. His strategy included taking the initiative on arms control to

a dramatic degree, so that he constantly wrong-footed Washington. But east-west interest in trying to bring some order into the monstrous nuclear arsenals was mutual.

To many parts of the world the year brought little change or hope. The mainland British forgot Ireland until the Ponny Day Massacre at Enniskillen. The Gulf War seemed neverending. Ordinary Russian people complained publicly about the war in Afghanistan. The round western capitals, not taken seriously even by his own Prime Minister, Terry Waite's disappearance stretched into its 10th month. Blood continued to flow in Sri Lanka. Famine returned to Ethiopia. Two presidents who replaced tyrants scraped by in the Argentine and the Philippines. There was a glimmer of hope for peace in Nicaragua, though not elsewhere in Central America. It was a good year for the most repressive whites in South Africa: no country lifted a finger to stop

The opening lines of Samuel Beckett's play Waiting For Godot are as follows: Estragon: "Nothing to be done". Vladimir: "I'm beginning to come round to that opinion". For 40 years mankind waited in vain for a sign that the nuclear arms race might be put into reverse. Even the congenitally optimistic Vladimirs had begun to turn into Estragons, True, the INF treaty envisages the destruction of less than 4 per cent of the stockpiles; but it is the first time the superpowers have agreed on any weapons reduction. The possibility exists that 1987 was the year when something began to be done MICHAEL DAVIE

markets tumble after "Black Monday". No one seemed capable of averting the decline although a more positive US response was hoped for









STORM DESTRUCTION

South-east England was devastated by hurricane-force winds which killed 19 people and uprooted 15 million trees. Emmes Garden, bowe, was badly hit, and much of the south was brought to a standstill with power cuts, damaged telephone lines and blocked roads and railways

FERRY DISASTER

The Townsend Thoresen ferry, Herald of Free Enterprise, capsized outside Zeebrugge harbour with the loss of 188 lives after it had left the Belgian port with its loading doors open. An inquiry into the disaster said the ferry company was infected with a "disease of sloppiness".

HUNGERFORD MOURNS

The calm of an English country town was shattered when Michael Ryan ran amok in Hungerford killing 16 people with a semi-automatic rifle he had bought for just £300 at his gun club. He later committed suiced when cornered by police in a local school. The Government promised that tough new legislation on the possession of firearms would be enforced by the summer

POPPY DAY MURDERERS

An IRA bomb exploded shortly before the start of a Remembrance Day service in Enniskillen killing 11 people and injuring 63. The "mindless" murder of innocent people drew condemnation thoughout the world while Mrs Thatcher said it was an act "desecrating the dead". The IRA expressed "regret" but then said an Army radio had triggered the bomb which was meant for the security services



















MAGGIE MANIA

Triumphant Tories celebrated another landslide victory in the General Election. Mrs Thatcher said, "I hope to go on and on"

SPYCATCHER SAGA
Peter Wright, the former MIS officer, and his lawyer, Malcolm
Turnbull, took on the British Government in the longest legal
battle of the year for the right to publish Spycatcher in Australia

THE DAVIDS DIVIDED
The uneasy alliance between David Owen and David Steel ended when Social Democrats voted to merge with the Liberals

EXPOSING CHILD ABUSE
Dr Marietta Higgs, a paediatrician, diagnosed a huge increase in
child sexual abuse in Cleveland. A young girl made history by
becoming the first child to give evidence in a sex case trial

PRISONS UNDER SIEGE

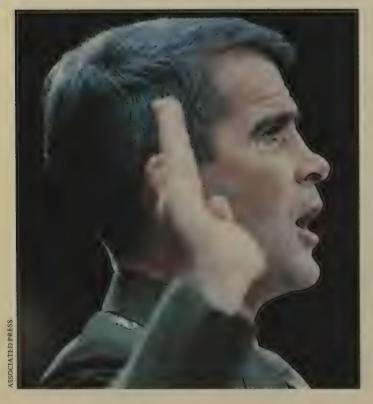
PRISONS UNDER SIEGE
Prisoners took to the roof at Barlinnie jail in Glasgow as Scotland
witnessed the first of six sieges in the year. Inmates complained
about brutality and changes in the parole system



THE TRAGEDY OF AIDS IN AFRICA

For the first time, the full extent of the AIDS epidemic came to light in Africa where as many as 10 million people are thought to be carrying the virus. During 1987 in Europe and America, AIDS continued to claim hundreds of lives with the European Commission saying that the number of AIDS cases in the EEC had reached nearly 8,000 and was doubling every nine months. However, it continued to be concentrated mainly among the usual high-risk groups, whereas in Africa the virus did not discriminate







THE NEW RED BARON

Mathias Rust, a 19-year-old West German pilot, flew through Russian air defences to land in Moscow's Red Square. The Russians sentenced him to four years in a labour camp

IRANGATE FIASCO

Colonel Oliver North and his secretary/shredder, Fawn Hall, became household names during the Iran-Contra hearings on covert efforts by the US government to arm the Contra rebels in Nicaragua using money from arms sales to Iran. Oliver North was the typical "All American boy"—loyal to the end—while Fawn Hall was offered \$500,000 to appear nude in Playboy







KOREA IN CRISIS

The fate of the 1988 Olympics in Seoul was placed in jeopardy when students took to the streets in some of the most violent protests seen for many years in South Korea

DAY OF JUDGMENT

Time ran out for two former Nazis when Rudolf Hess committed suicide aged 93 in Spandau Prison and Klaus Barbie, a former Gestapo chief, was finally brought to trial in Lyons. Hess had been the sole occupant of Spandau since 1966, while Barbie had been a businessman in Bolivia. His publicity-conscious lawyer, Jacques Verges, could not save him from life imprisonment







ROYAL DEPARTURE

Prince Edward packed his bags and left a Royal Marines commando training course after only four months because he did not want to make the service a career. For the Duke of Edinburgh, it proved a great disappointment but Prince Edward appeared to win public approval for his decision

ROYAL FIRST

At the Trooping the Colour, the Queen rode in an open carriage when her favourite horse, Burmese, was retired from the ceremony after 17 years' service. On November 20 the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary



The Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson set a new world record in the 100 metres final of the World Championships in Rome. Johnson (lane five) won in 9.83 seconds and beat the formidable Olympic champion Carl Lewis (lane six) on the way to the title



BRUTE FORCE

Twenty-one-year-old Mike
Tyson became the youngest
undisputed world heavyweight
boxing champion when he beat
Tony Tucker in Las Vegas. The
ferocious power of Tyson will
probably result in his dominating
this division for a long time and
his proposed clash with Britain's
Frank Bruno in 1988 looks
rather one-sided



WHERE PUTTNAM WENT WRONG

David Puttnam's shrill attack—when head of Columbia Pictures—on Hollywood profligacy did not endear him to his American counterparts. Aaron Latham charts the events that led to his swift exit

WHEN HE went to Columbia as the new studio head just over a year ago, David Puttam declared war on big agents and big stars and big budgets. He attacked the deal makers—powerful agents who specialize in putting togolere lucrative packages of high-pried scripts and expensive directors and stars. Puttnam said he planned to change the rules and salaries in Hollywood. Said it loudly, Said it strilly. Said it repeatedly. And sometimes said it rudely. Hollywood felt as if it had been insulted.

It was the latest battle—and one of the most dramatic—in the long war between the agents and the studio executives, a warthe—agents have been winning for the past several years. After 12 months in the Hollywood trenches, David Puttama lost this battle, making Hollywood once again safe for Mercedes (the drove a grey Audi) and for Beverly Hills palaess (the would not live in one).

Puttnam was summoned to New York and told "it is not working out". Then he returned to Hollywood, where he appeared to be trying to decide whether to resign. Several days after he had been told that his services would no longer be needed, he announced that he was resigning, at a dramatic and tearful meeting at Columbia.

Such was the inglorious end of what had begun as a seemingly glorious experiment. Puttnam had wanted to go back to the way it used to be. Back to film-making and not just deal making. Back to the Frank Capra days. For Columbia's Capra was one of his greatest heroes, one of the reasons Puttnam wanted to work at Columbia in the first place. He even saw his new job as a kind of remake, an update, of a Capra classic. MP Puttnam Goes to Hollywood. David Puttnam Cale Went to Hollywood the way Jimmy Carter went to Washington: with an accent on his tongue and a gleam in his eye.

His friends always believed that if he had one quality it was an exact understanding of his talents and limitations. On the wall of his old office in London, hidden away in a mews near the Natural History Museum, there used to be a slightly faded portrait of the great Russian impresario, Diaghilev, It had a very special significance for him.

"When I was in advertising a marvellous man told me, 'Be like Diaghilev. He was the greatest influence on ballet and music this century, but he couldn't play a note and he couldn't dance a step.'

"It struck me that he helped other people create things. So I tried to make a career for myself like that," he said. Puttman was shrewd enough

David Puttnam CBE, film producer, emerged from Columbia several million dollars richer—but defeated after his one-year stint

to know that he might not be able to write a script, edit a piece of film or direct a camera as well as some, but he reckoned he had the energy and showmanship to become an impresario on the lines of Diaghilev.

His genius was as an independent film-maker. He started with That'll be the Day and Stardust Memories and proceeded to Agatha, Bugsy Malone, The Duellist and his greatest hit, Chariots of Fire. His strength was that he was a lone wolf, unfettered by the demands and bureaucracy of big organization. He was never a corporate warrior, but rather a natural "iconoclast and miniaturist", as he put it. He even called his small production company Enigma, because that is how his headmaster described him.

Throughout his success Puttnam seemed more than happy to keep Hollywood at arm's length. When he did spend a year there late in the 1970s after the success of *Midnight Express*, a film he had produced for his old friend Alan Parker, he always felt ill at ease. His most decidedly English taste and his unpredictability simply did not fit in a town devoted, as often as not, to a rather base American culture and formulaic success.

The mystery is why David Puttnam forgot that self-knowledge and accepted the offer at Columbia. It may be that he found in himself a mission to reform the profligacy of Hollywood, but it is also true to say that Puttnam is a cultural chauvinist who tends towards the belief that the film world in America should aspire to the sort of worthy concern for international issues found in features pages of *The Guardian* newspaper.

"For a year David Puttnam was the conscience of Hollywood," says a screenwriter, "telling people they've lived their lives wrongly and that money was not everything." It was a message that would not endear Puttnam to those who ran Hollywood.

David Puttnam—who was the first film-maker to head a Hollywood studio in many years—was welcomed to town with a special luncheon. Rising to speak to an audience of agents and producers and other insiders, Puttnam said that people in the film business are so richly rewarded that they have an obligation to give something back.

According to someone who attended the lunch, Puttnam used Robert Redford as an example of a good star who gives something back in the form of the Sundance Film Institute, which he sponsors. Sundance puts on workshops and subsidizes budding screenwriters.

Then David Puttnam used Bill Murray as an example of a star who does not give enough back. "Bill Murray is a taker," he said.

The "boys' club" that runs Hollywood had

The "boys' club" that runs Hollywood had come to the lunch to see what the new boy was like. Now they thought they knew: Puttnam might be brilliant, but he was not smart.

Not only was Bill Murray powerful but he was also represented by the Creative Artists Agency, the most powerful agency in town, run by Michael Ovitz.

To make matters even worse, Columbia Pictures was in the middle of delicate negotiations with Murray and Ovitz and CAA to produce *Ghostbusters II*—starring Bill Murray. "What business is it of his," Murray complained, "what I do with my money?"

Puttnam's statement about Hollywood's greed turned out to be extremely costly.

Murray told the Creative Artists Agency to inform Columbia that he would not make *Ghostbusters II*. The project was impossible without him, which may have cost Columbia as much as \$200 million, the sum earned by the initial *Ghostbusters*, one of Hollywood's most successful films.

David Puttnam, who possesses a good instinct for the dramatic, seemed to waste no time in making matters worse. It was as though he knew that the hero was supposed to get into as much trouble as possible in the first act.

"People here," he said in print, "want to do business with big names and have dinner with big names. I want to make films for the rest of the world with people who are genuinely unknown."

Thanks very much.

Unfortunately the new studio boss simply had to do some business with some big stars. For instance, the increasingly famous British star of Mr Puttnam Goes to Hollywood was forced to deal with the much more famous black star. For one of the projects Puttnam inherited when he came to Columbia was a Bill Cosby film. Cosby, an astonishingly versatile comic, is known in Britain for his television show of the same name which is one of America's most popular shows. The studio head who did not like expensive stars had to work with one of the biggest stars in America.

"Puttnam was in a bit over his head," says someone who worked on the Cosby film *Leonard Part 6*. "He got there and had a big-budget film starring the most popular man in America and a spokesman for Coke."

Of course, Columbia is a satellite of the Coca-Cola Company. Which is a little like the tail wagging the dog, the soft-drink stand owning the cinema rather than the other way around.

Even if Puttnam had wanted to cancel Cosby's film, it would not have been possible because of Cosby's Coca-Cola connexions. The star at one time even owned a big piece of a Coke bottling plant.

One of Puttnam's perceived mistakes seems to have been hiring a bluff, sometimes too bluff, Englishman named Alan Marshall to produce the film. Most of those involved, including Cosby, found Marshall's manner unacceptable.

There are two stories circulating in Hollywood about the Cosby flap. One is that Cosby first complained to Puttnam about Marshall



He saw his new job at Columbia as a kind of remake, an update, of a Frank Capra classic: *Mr Puttnam Goes to Hollywood*

and then took his complaints a few steps higher: to Coke president Donald Keough. Another (and this one seems to be closer to the truth) is that Cosby simply waited—rather testily—for Puttnam to realize that changes had to be made. But, says one person who witnessed the fallout, "David didn't pick up the ball, didn't take action".

Bill Cosby stayed at Columbia long enough to complete the picture, which turned out to be something of a mess, and then got out. Cosby's next film will be made at Warner Brothers.

The Coca-Cola Company began to look at Puttnam nervously and to wonder whether he might not be as large a mistake as the New Coca-Cola drink, disastrously introduced by the company two years ago.

After a fiasco involving a film named *Ishtar*, starring Dustin Hoffman, Warren Beatty and a camel, which lost \$40 million (\$10 million of which were split in fees by Beatty and Hoffman) the Coca-Cola Company decided to take Puttnam out to lunch and give him a pep talk. True, the film had been made by a previous administration at Columbia, but Puttnam had often and repeatedly expressed his dissatisfaction and made two powerful enemies in the shape of Messrs Hoffman and Beatty while doing so. The Coca-Cola Company felt his behaviour manifested a lack of corporate spirit and, more alarming, an absence of common sense.

"Earn your enemies," said a powerful Coke voice. "Don't make them gratuitously." But Puttnam apparently did not listen. Perhaps because he was talking so much.

Puttnam, who liked to talk to reporters in those days, referred in print to "producers who have to hire producers". It sounded very much as if Puttnam was referring to the producer Ray Stark, a powerful member of the Hollywood nobility who had made such hits as Funny Girl and The Way We Were.

Puttnam continued with his crusade by trying to terminate longstanding deals Columbia had with veteran producers. He had some success and eventually drove Stark off the Columbia lot and into the arms of Universal Studios.

At one point Ray Stark presented a project to Columbia, where he had a "first look" deal. Puttnam looked and turned it down, put it in "turnaround". But Puttnam added that if Stark could not set up the picture at another studio, he should bring it back to Columbia—without

himself attached as producer—for another look. Ray Stark is said to have vowed vengeance of biblical proportions.

"Real wrath-of-God-type stuff. Fire and brimstone coming down from the skies. Forty years of darkness. Earthquakes. Volcanoes. Human sacrifice. Dogs and cats living together." Those words are actually from *Ghostbusters*—the hit without a sequel—but they suggest Stark's mood.

Even before he left London to come to Hollywood, David Puttnam received a transatlantic telephone call from Martin Ransohoff, a producer who had made many films for Columbia. Ransohoff wanted to talk about a promising project called Switching Channels—a remake of His Girl

Friday, which was a remake of The Front Page—only the new film would be about a television correspondent rather than a newspaper reporter. It would be His Girl Friday in a television studio.

Ransohoff told Puttnam that his option on the material was running out—it had only six months to go. If the option lapsed before the film was set up-at Columbia, or elsewhere, if Columbia did not want it—then some \$400,000 might well be lost. So he was in a hurry.

'A quick no," Ransohoff told Puttnam, "would be better than a real slow yes."

Puttnam assured Ransohoff that he would read the script over the weekend and give him a fast decision. That was in July. When Puttnam arrived in Hollywood in September, he still had not given Ransohoff an answer. More waiting. At last, some 10 weeks after the original telephone call, Puttnam finally announced that he was passing on Switching Channels. Sorry.

A short while later Martin Ransohoff happened to be having lunch with Coke executive Richard Gallop. "What's going on?" asked Gallop. "How are you getting on with Puttnam?" So Ransohoff told him.

"It's a good script," added the producer. "Let us look at it," said Gallop.

Gallop and Coca-Cola decided to finance Switching Channels for another of its filmmaking enterprises, Nelson Entertainment. So Coke made a film that Coke's film company had turned down. It will be released in March, several months after the release of David Puttnam from his duties at Columbia.

Marty Ransohoff also wanted to produce Jagged Edge II at Columbia. Since Jagged Edge had been one of Columbia's biggest hits since Ghostbusters, the idea made financial sense. And Ransohoff had a script.

"I'm not keen on doing sequels," Puttnam

But then a former head of Columbia called Ransohoff and told him he really should make Jagged Edge II. He suggested that not doing so was like forgetting to cash a big cheque.

Soon Victor Kaufman, the head of Tri-Star Motion Pictures, was on the telephone expressing the same opinion. This was particularly interesting since Coca-Cola owned a third of Tri-Star's stock and basically controlled the company. So here was Coke, at least by proxy, once again second-guessing David Puttnam.

Puttnam induces strong reactions, even in his oldest friends. He tests their loyalty, and it is true to say that he is not a man about whom people feel indifferent. He is also capable of winning respect, as this director admits.

"Studios usually see film-makers as naughty children who are wasting money with their games," says David Selzer, who directed the forthcoming Punchline for Columbia, "So we all wind up battered children. But Puttnam was different. He was completely supportive. I've been doing movies for 20 years, and he's absolutely the best. I don't expect to have that experience again.

He would always call and ask permission before he came down to the set. When he arrived, he wouldn't introduce himself. No one knew him. He would talk to the folks on the set. He would even talk to the extras, who are untouchables in the Hollywood caste system.' Selzer used to wonder what the extras would do if they knew they were talking to the head of the studio.

"Puttnam experienced a period of discovery which defined himself," Selzer says. "He came away with a real feeling that he was speaking for many others. And then he was crucified.'

"He began to take himself more seriously than the work," says the head of a rival studio. "He got caught up in his own mythology. His mission became sacrosanct. A personality cult. He wanted to be the biggest star at Columbia. His movies never had stars, and he didn't want his studio to have stars either. Just him.'

The wrath of Hollywood was activated by the indisputable fact of Puttnam's own large salary, which was rumoured to be \$10 million over three years. There was a hypocrisy which Hollywood was not slow to spot.

Puttnam is both a highbrow intellectual and a school dropout. He was born in Southgate, north London, in the middle of the middle class. His father was a Fleet Street photographer.



Puttnam induces strong reactions, even in his oldest friends. He is not a man about whom people feel indifferent

When he was 16 years old, Puttnam left school with three O levels. He became a messenger with an advertising agency. By the time he reached his 20th birthday he had been promoted to the position of account executive. In 1966 he became an agent for photographers, opening his own agency and, ironically, operating with all the skill and avaricious vim that he later attacked in Hollywood agents. It was only a small hop to making films, for Puttnam, who has a sure eye for talent, had grown up with some of the best directors in the advertis-

During the 1970s he seemed incapable of putting a foot wrong. He delighted in the unexpected, the unusual, the slightly off-centre, which helped to create his most satisfying films. It was iconoclasm that produced Bugsy Malone, a gangster musical, starring only children, with Alan Parker; as well as The Duellist, directed by Ridley Scott. He always worked with men he understood, people from more or less the same background as he: Michael Apted, Ray Connolly, the writer, and Hugh Hudson, the director.

In 1979 Puttnam had the idea to produce a film about British runners in the 1924 Olympics. He proposed the picture to an American studio and received a letter informing him that his film would have "no validity at all" in the American market. That studio was Columbia

When he later came to Columbia as the

studio head—a job he got largely because of the success of Chariots of Fire-he hung the rejection letter on his office wall. Perhaps there was a hint of "I told you so", but he also wanted to remind himself to try, as far as possible, not to reject any such films himself, no matter how shaky their marketing "validity"

During his brief reign at Columbia he approved the making of 16 films, all of which reflect The Guardian newspaper taste. One is about the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear plant, another about the invasion of Afghanistan, called Motherland, and a third called The Cory Aquino Story. He developed a new nonfiction division at Columbia which started in earnest by looking into the possibility of making films about the Lebanese civil war, the story of Martha Mitchell (the wife of the US Attorney General during the Watergate scandal) and Binderweed, a story about the IRA.

The machinery that would eventually crush

David Puttnam was officially set in motion on August 29. A Saturday. Like so much in the film business, it began with a telephone call. Coca-Cola called Victor Kaufman, the 44-year-old head of Tri-Star, in New York and asked him to fly to Atlanta, the home of Coke, the following day. Sunday. They hoped it would not be inconvenient at such short notice. He was able to work the trip into his busy schedule.

Kaufman, like many film executives, was used to working at weekends. As they like to say in Hollywood: If you don't come in on Saturday, don't bother to come in on Sunday.

On the plane to Atlanta, Kaufman, who was on his way to see his bosses, may have wondered if he

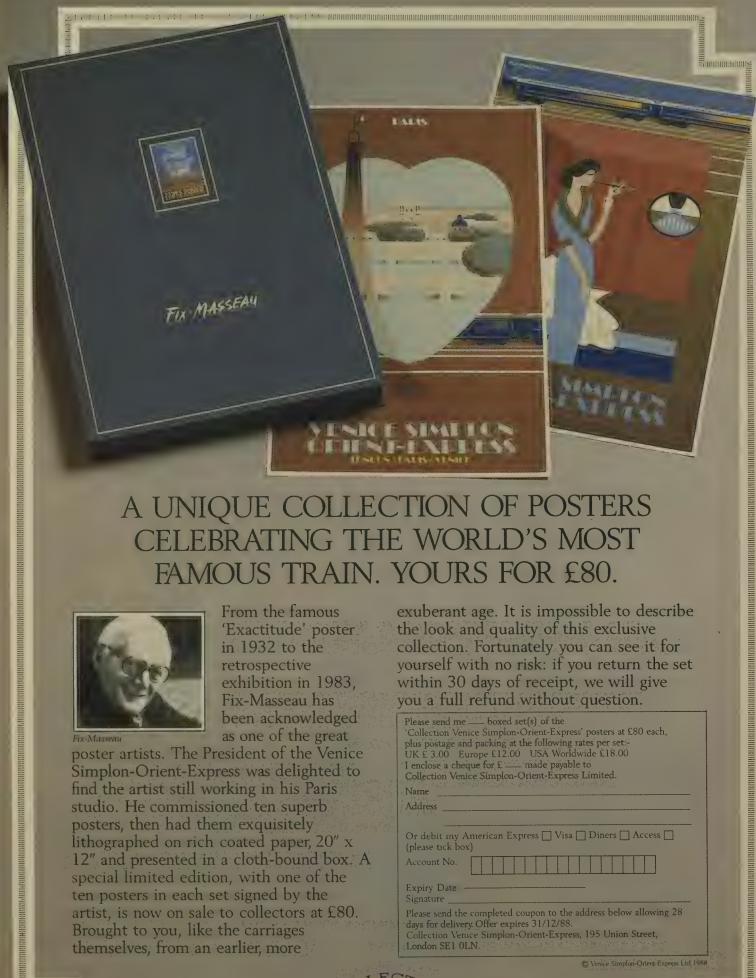
was going down to be fired. After all, Tri-Star, which Coke controlled, had not been performing very well. Its films were usually mediocre. Its share of US box-office dollars was only 7 per cent. And in five years it had produced only one hit, Rambo: First Blood

Reaching Atlanta, Kaufman made his way to Coca-Cola headquarters. Whatever his fears may have been, Victor Kaufman soon learnt that he had come to hear good news, not bad. He was going to be given a promotion. A big one. Coke chairman Roberto Goizueta told Kaufman that the parent company wanted Tri-Star to take over Columbia.

Actually, Kaufman has a history with Columbia. He had worked as a lawyer at the studio for a decade, and he had been the studio's general counsel during the Begelman scandal. And now he would "own" it. And that was not all. Coke wanted Tri-Star to absorb its other entertainment companies.

So Tri-Star, the modest little film company, would become a constellation, a whole entertainment galaxy, a megaconglomerate with assets worth over \$1.6 billion. And it would be given a new name: Columbia Pictures Entertainment, Inc. Victor Kaufman, who would be president and chief executive officer, would be the big winner in this reorganization.

Coca-Cola's motive for restructuring its entertainment division was primarily fiscal. But in ridding itself of one liability (debt) it became



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THE BUILD

inevitable that David Puttnam would be shed.

The talks that would change David Puttnam's life continued in Atlanta, but no one bothered to tell David Puttnam. These discussions lasted all day Sunday and stretched on into Monday. But still no one bothered to inform Puttnam. The next morning he read that he was being sold in a story in the *Los Angeles Times*, which was delivered to his Hollywood home. A friend who later dropped in to see how he was doing says, "Puttnam was very shaken that evening."

The next morning's paper contained another slap. Coca-Cola chairman Roberto Goizueta said in print that he was coming to Los Angeles to "spend 10 minutes" with each of the company's five operational heads to explain what was going to happen.

When Roberto Goizueta, accompanied by Coke president Donald Keough and Victor Kaufman, arrived in Hollywood, the 10 minutes expanded into a business breakfast—a film-business tradition.

Puttnam later told friends that he had been given a number of assurances that nothing would change. He seemed reassured by the meeting. But he said he was afraid of a "creeping freeze"—being paralysed by inches.

At the regular Friday-morning staff meeting, Fred Bernstein, the number three at the studio, reported that the breakfast had gone well. And Columbia, where almost everyone had enthusiastically joined the Puttnam crusade, breathed a sigh of relief. They were trying to believe in a hackneyed Hollywood happy ending.

Then David Puttnam went to New York to meet Victor Kaufman. Puttnam had once said that he would not want to make *Rambo* even if he knew it would be a hit. But now he was to work for the man who had made it.

When they met, both men tense, Victor Kaufman told David Puttnam that he was afraid they had a basic disagreement.

Two days later David Puttnam attended a regular monthly film seminar that he had instituted at Columbia. Everyone, from janitors

to directors, was invited to talk about films. These seminars helped to create, and were a manifestation of, the extraordinary *esprit de corps* that the studio had come to enjoy.

That evening the 200 Columbia employees began by watching a film called *Someone to Watch Over Me*, a thriller directed by Puttnam's old collaborator Ridley Scott. Afterwards there was a brief ceremony involving a special award for Frank Capra and then Puttnam broke the news. The audience apparently gasped with shock. Some even cried.

Puttnam said the decision had been made during discussions with Victor Kaufman. He said he had been the one who made the suggestion. He went on to say that he had no regrets. He called his brief time at Columbia "the most wonderful year" of his life. He told his Columbia family that he was moving his biological family back to England, taking with him "a bunch of memories I'll never forget"

"I do plead guilty to strong beliefs. I believe in the future of the film artist who is prepared to show sensitivity to the real needs of society..."



The trouble is that I am not a very good collaborator—I am not a corporate man

When he sat down, the standing ovation began and seemed to go on forever. If only someone could make films that played as well.

"I may have criticized the system," he said. "The power of the agents. The high salaries of the stars. But it is absolutely wrong to say that Hollywood pushed me out. In retrospect, I may have made the wrong bet in being so outspoken from my arrival. I accept that it has been very hard to get people to like you when you are asking them sometimes to take a pay cut. But I would have been hypocritical not to have been so open about my opinions. Hollywood is a self-perpetuating oligarchy, and I still maintain that.

"My initial reaction was that I could work with Tri-Star. The trouble is that I am not a very good collaborator—I'm not a corporate man." And the corporation for better or worse, did not want him.

But David Puttnam is getting paid—a lot. According to Hollywood sources, perhaps as much as \$7 million for not running Columbia.

David Puttnam talked to a few friends about his "decision" to leave. He told one friend that he had made the only honorable decision. He said he had no alternative, because the alternative was to limp on. He told another friend that he could not continue to work under these circumstances.

"I can't think of a time in recent Hollywood history," says the head of another studio, "when a studio head has left a company for reasons that are not about the failure or success of the product. He left without being tested. If his movies are successful, they'll be building statues of him on Sunset Boulevard. If his stuff works—and I suspect some of it will—he will be made into a hero. More so than if he'd stayed in the job."

The fact remains that before he became embroiled in Hollywood Puttnam had a sure eye for commercial success. If his successor, Dawn Steel, cancels the whole of his contribution to Columbia, she may just lose one or two films like that other Puttnam project that Hollywood rejected—Chariots of Fire \bigcirc

Puttnam on his future

AT HIS home in Los Angeles, David Puttnam is recovering from his ordeal and a severe bout of glandular fever. While convalescing he is thinking of the future—the possibility of setting up a new studio in Britain on the lines of his dream for Columbia.

"I have been approached by people with money who are interested in the project," he said, "but I have not been well enough and in a fit mental state to think about it seriously. I just haven't got my head together yet."

Perhaps why Puttnam has suffered so much since his departure from Columbia is because he understood that he had been given a mandate. "I was given it by the Coca-Cola Company. They asked me to come up with a

new kind of studio system. That's what I was hired to do. I would never have come over here to take on what already was. The only reason they hired me was because I was so critical.

"There is no way you can reinvent the studio system when you retain a tiny group of people making vast incomes. My job was to come in and change that." Puttnam thought it was his mandate to "get rid of the old guard" who were costing the company millions of dollars a year.

Practically everything is disputed about Puttnam's fall. He himself insists—despite the received wisdom of the studio lots—that he was not fired. "The fact is that I wasn't summoned to New York, I stopped over there

voluntarily on the way to Toronto to discuss some projects. It is true to say that we agreed we couldn't work together."

Puttnam had a contract which among other things guaranteed that he could not be called upon to work for any company other than the one he had been hired by. So the change of ownership involving Tri-Star naturally affected his standing. Moreover, Puttnam, who is used to being on both ends of a contract, made sure he would be compensated in the event of a resignation.

There is also a dispute over the fate of some of the film projects that he is said to have canned. Puttnam insists that he was not responsible "for the failure to make *Ghostbusters II*" and that he did want to make *Jagged Edge II*, despite his dislike of sequels.

He also disputes the reports of the crucial lunch at which it is alleged he began to dig his own grave in Hollywood by attacking the star system. He has tried to establish the "anonymous source" who talked to the Press, but without success.

He was often criticized for the amount he was said to be earning over the three-year contract—which, incidentally, Puttnam says Coca-Cola tried to extend last July—particularly as his main line of attack on Hollywood was the incredible fees being paid to the stars. Puttnam is defensive. "I don't see any correlation between the fee I'm being paid to do a job and the job itself."

The one thing everyone agrees on is that Coca-Cola are glad to be rid of Puttnam. "I would say they are probably delighted not to have to contend with me," he says. "We probably would not have got on, and they were overjoyed to see the back of me." \bigcirc

A CHORUS OF CRITICS

Terry Coleman talks to the men in charge of opera at Covent Garden and the Coliseum. Photographs by Stuart Nicol

NOBODY denies that the Royal Opera at Covent Garden has had a rough time during the last two years or so, not even the people who run the place. I asked the new opera director, Paul Findlay, and he simply said "Very rough. No doubt about it."

But then I went too far. Having in mind those various published comments which suggested that the only outstanding thing about Covent Garden these days was the unrivalled rapidity of the barmen in the Crush Bar, and that the place had, as Rodney Milnes of The Spectator put it, been lurching from unplanned triumph to planned disaster. I put to Mr. Findlay the learned remark of the learned German editor of the magazine Opernwelt, who has said that the house was entirely without artistic profile.

At which Mr Findlay, an amiable man, took fire, and said, with spirit, "Anyone who says better, that, I'll throw it back in his teeth," Good for him. And Covent Garden does have grand plans, one of which is to present opera, not just concerts but opera, at the Albert Hall, More of

First to the undeniable disasters. There have always been operatic disasters. Opera attracts them. In 1961, on the first night of Tosca at San Francisco, one of the world's great houses, the execution squad in the third act consisted entirely of college boys. Being completely unrehearsed, and completely ignorant of the opera, and told to go on stage and shoot, but not whom to shoot, they used their initiative and shot not Cavaradossi but Tosca. In 1906, at Naples, the first night of d'Erlanger's Tess was interrupted by an eruption of Vesuvius, which Thomas Hardy, on whose novel the opera was based, thought all of a piece with his heroine's tragic career. And then, as recently as September, 1987, the new computer of the Vienna as there were seats. Brawls ensued.

In the last two years Covent Garden has added to that catalogue. Its production of such a stock piece as Il trovatore was described as ruinously ragged. The Czech leading lady walked out of Jenufa. Domingo did not turn up for Otello, and, when that opera was finally staged, the first performance was risked without rehearsal. Fidelio, played partly on stilts, was booed. Eva Wagner, the great-granddaughter of Wagner himself. departed, to the relief of most, from her job as opera director. Then the opera chorus rebelled, and eight lost performances cost the Royal Opera £250,000.

This was all the harder to bear since the English National Opera, at the Coliseum, was flourishing, Jonathan Miller's mafia Rigoletto. and then his Don Giovanni, were more original than anything at Covent Garden. The ENO's Butterfly included some of Puccini's original material that had not been heard for many years. And the ENO, having toured the United States to great applause in 1985, was invited to fill in for two weeks at the Vienna Staatsoper in 1989. All this from a company which used to be the old Sadler's Wells, and which moved to the Coliseum only in 1968.

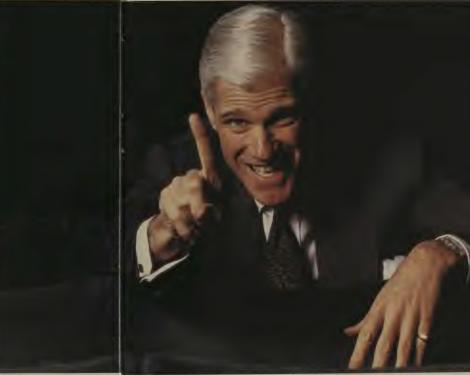
The truth is that there is more opera in London than there has ever been before-as much now as in New York, only a little less than in Vienna or Berlin (East and West), and more than in any Italian city. And, in what is not an essentially English art, the ENO is doing

Covent Garden and the Coliseum are very different places. The Royal Opera sings a work in the original language, the ENO always in English. The best seat at Covent Garden costs up to £70, but only £21.50 at the Coliseum. The rows of champagne-buckets set out in the Crush Bar at Covent Garden speak for themselves

The theatre programmes tell their own story, too, in the advertisements they carry. I take as a sample one programme from each, for performances within two days of each other. The Opera House has 30 pages of advertisements. against the Coliseum's 12. Each has four-anda-half pages from restaurants; the ENO has two-and-a-half pages from what you could broadly call the financial world, against the Opera House's six. But the big difference is in the advertisements for jewellery, watches, clothes, drink, and cigarettes, where Covent Garden has 111 pages against two.

Covent Garden is the place to be seen. Many seats are bought by companies as directors' perks. Throughout the last season, whether the performances were good, bad, or indifferent, it was often difficult to get seats, even for ready money, sometimes even if you knew the boxoffice manager.

As for the theatres themselves, the Coliseum is, for my money, the more beautiful. Covent Garden, rebuilt in 1858, is regulation Victorian cast-iron arches, chipped gilt, and pleasantly tatty red plush. The Coliseum, which was built in 1904 for Edward Stoll as a music-hall, and later used for Cinerama, is not only the largest theatre in London (2,354 seats) but it is also the grandest. It was there the Bolshoi Ballet generally being made much of by the opera



Peter Jonas, director of the ENO since 1985, danced when they came to London in 1974.

But Covent Garden is traditionally the fashionable theatre, and fashion has now turned round and savaged it. Most of the savaging has come from the opera critics. There are rare critics like the late Philip Hope-Wallace, who had known opera all over the world for 50 years, was forever picking out what gave him pleasure in a production, and was so sparing with blame that he was often known as Charity-Wallace. But opera critics, whether good or bad, have great power. One critic for a national paper is openly regarded as an ass, but it takes someone with the authority of a Verdi to kick a critic downstairs. So opera critics are for the most part, and with evident exceptions, a spoilt lot, getting the best seats not

only for first nights but for cast changes, and

after 11 years in the US with the Chicago Symphony. "We have to compete to sell ourselves, to make sure the public knows what we've got."

houses. They come to respect their own opinions mightily, and naturally bite the hands companies. The man at the Coliscum, perhaps

Critics apart, there are always people ready to condemn the unconscionable privilege of Covent Garden. Gala nights are considered fair game for a bit of derision. In fact, a Covent Garden audience is much less openly prosperous than one at the Met in New York where, on a first night, hundreds of East Side women sit in the air-conditioned auditorium in their mink coats because the Met is the place to wear the coats for show, and the cloakroom won't take them anyway, for fear of armed robbery. Nor is Covent Garden so lush as to attract the professional demonstrating classes who, at the opening of a La Scala season in Milan, pelt the capitalist bourgeois audience as it arrives, with rotten fruit.

I went to see the men who run both opera strangely, has the grander office: a panelled room in a George I house next to the theatre and which is reached from it by a bridge.

Peter Jonas is the son of a German-Jewish industrial chemist, and was born and educated in England. He always wanted to work for the ENO and in 1974 wrote offering his services as a dogsbody in the box office, but was rejected without an interview. He then went to America, and spent 11 years with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, first as assistant to Solti and then as artistic administrator. In 1985 he returned to run the company which would not give him a job in the box-office. He is still only 41.

Doing well, weren't they? "Head just above water," said Jonas, putting a hand palm downwards just beneath his chin to illustrate

the point. He then went on about the Arts Council grant. But, I said, look, I had heard the directors of the big opera and theatre companies saying each year for 20 years that they would collapse if they did not get more money, and nobody had ever collapsed.

Jonas let that go, so I asked him about the various Covent Garden disasters, and then it was his turn to say look, the ENO had an easier task in that sense, having always suffered from adversity. If the Coliseum's carpets appeared less tatty than Covent Garden's, it was only because he lit them carefully. His roof leaked more, anyway, and, unlike Covent Garden, the ENO did not own its premises. Soon they would have to negotiate a new lease. But, yes, his was the last of the old-fashioned repertory opera companies, doing 220 performances of 21 works in one year, and it was the biggest lyric theatre in Europe.

What about his audience? A few months ago would they still have been voting SDP? He would not accept any of this, but said that they came to the Coliseum as if it were a sister or brother institution to their church.

What? "Where they actually worship something," he said.

But an opera was a show? "In medieval times," he said, "people went to their church not only for comfort but also for a show."

Why did he think Jonathan Miller had come to the ENO rather than Covent Garden? "People fall in and out of love. Let's hope he stays in love."

Would the ENO be going to Vienna as invited? He said they had an invitation to go to Moscow and to the Leningrad Kirov for the same two weeks in June, 1989. They would have to choose. The Russians were asking for Miller's Mikado.

I said I had seen a lot at the Coliseum which had moved me, but why had they produced Pacific Overtures, a Sondheim musical which had failed on Broadway and had no tunes? Jonas started by saying that Stephen Sondheim was "the most interesting popular-serious composer" of the century.

What? What about Puccini? He then modified his answer, and Sondheim became "the most interesting popular-serious composer of the 70s and 80s". And, said Jonas, there was much that had moved him in the lyrics of Pacific Overtures.

If there were to be musicals, why didn't he put on 42nd Street? "I might do My Fair Lady one day

Did he think there was anything to this idea of fashion, that the ENO was up at the moment and Covent Garden down? "Absolutely." said Mr Jonas who, for all his energy, is a modest man. "I fear fashion. Every time I see them having a bad time, I think 'There, but for the grace of God, go I.

What was this about his saying he was a huckster? "Sure I am. We have to compete to sell ourselves, to make sure the public knows what we've got, and wants to buy something from us." In cold print those words are not going to do justice to Peter Jonas. I suspect he calls himself a huckster, because he is, remember, a man who has spent 11 years in America. where some opera houses advertise themselves as circuses would in England. His is a circus which, this season, is putting on a new Barber of Seville by Miller, a new Billy Budd, a new Magic Flute, and Ken Russell's Tannhäuser.

At Covent Garden there is an interregnum. which is part of its trouble. Sir John Tooley has been general director of the Royal Opera House, which means both opera and ballet. since 1970. This makes him the longest-serving intendant of any great opera house. He is retiring in July, 1988 at the end of the present season, Jeremy Isaacs-ex-Granada, and now outgoing head of Channel 4-will take over on September 1 at the beginning of the 1988-89 season. They will, however, work in tandem from the beginning of next year.

In the meantime, Paul Findlay has been appointed opera director. He is 44 and started at Covent Garden as opera press officer. This gives me a chance to recount a story which tells you something about the climate at Covent Garden in not-too-distant days. When he was press officer (opera), the girl who was press of the Arts Council grant. It meant that while officer (ballet) was expected at Christmas to the ENO could put on eight new productions a

Paul Findlay, Covent Garden's opera director, in the auditorium of the Royal Opera House give Christmas-boxes to Serjeant Martin the year, Covent Garden could do only about half



£30, more than she earned in a week. She was a

girl of spirit and inquired if this could be right.

The management was surprised to learn that

she had no private income. All her predecessors

had. She was permitted to put the gifts on her

done better? I had thought he would deny the

underlying assumption of this question; but he

"that could be asked." He pointed out some-

thing that is obvious but not generally realized:

Covent Garden was the only big opera house

which had to share its house, and its grant, with

a ballet company. Opera took only 43 per cent

did not. "The most pertinent thing," he said,

Well, I said to Findlay, why had the ENO

doorman, and to the footmen. This cost about the number

Yes, but what about that Fidelio on stilts? He said they had not seen the stilts until the dress rehearsal. I find this amazing but conceivable, particularly in a house shared by opera and ballet, where there is no regular opera company anyway, and where the director was new.

What about the Otello? Domingo could not come when he had agreed because of the Mexican earthquake, and the director, Peter Hall, then pulled out. But why, when the postponed production was given to a new director. Elijah Moshinsky, was he allowed to ditch new sets which had already cost about £125,000?

Findlay said they had salvaged a lot of the stuff, and the loss had been £30,000-40,000. On the face of it, he said, there was no way you



where the best seats cost £70. "I shall be responsible to Jeremy Isaacs. If I don't manage, I'll expect to be out on my ear. We're not down."

striking, and no doubt fashionable, backcloths

by Sidney Nolan had little to do with the opera

and less to do with the rest of the set, which was

by Timothy O'Brien. I knew that Nolan and

So I asked Findlay why he thought that the

fashion was changing. What did Covent

Garden have? "Haitink Ithe new music director

of the Royal Operal has already demonstrated

a strength of purpose we haven't seen for some

time." It was Haitink, from the Concert-

gebouw, who had started "Garden" concerts,

with the orchestra in a shell on the stage of the

opera house. It was he who had insisted that the

O'Brien had barely spoken to each other.

alternative? Did you go round asking directors in descending order of ability until you found one who would use the existing sets? The London opera audience expected to be fed, and it wanted the best.

Why had Miller gone to the ENO rather than to Covent Garden? Findlay said Covent Garden had wanted him to do a new Force of Destiny, but it had not worked out.

Why had the critics been so bitchy? Findlay made a face, but then glasnost asserted itself: "They thought we'd got stuck. They sensed a lack of purpose."

Ah! Did he think there were fashions, up and down, and that Covent Garden was at the moment down? "Yes. But we've started being I wondered how. In the previous week I had

planned production of Parsifal could not be This coming season they had four new proseen a good new Marriage of Figaro, and a not ductions, three others brought in from abroad, on my ear. We're not down."

so good Entführung aus dem Serail, where the including Anna Bolena from Stuttgart, with Joan Sutherland, and 16 revivals. Later on they would have a new Ring. For the Mozart bicentenary year of 1991 they would have three new productions of the Da Ponte operas. They had English surtitles on many evenings, which their surveys had shown most people liked. And they would present opera in the Albert Hall, Concert performances? No. said Findlay. full performances. But how would they get your sets in? He wasn't telling me that, but agreed that the hall could seat 6,000.

Then I quoted that German who said Covent Garden had no artistic profile, and Findlay said he would throw such words back

Would it all work? "I shall be responsible to Isaacs, If I don't manage, I'll expect to be out



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INCURRING HER DISPLEASURE

By Lewis Edwards, Illustration by Michael McInnerney

THERE IS a joke circulating in Whitehall sorrowful but composed expression of a high ings, he almost invariably does just that. about the need for a new etiquette book for Ministers. It concerns what might be called the departure protocol at Number 10 Downing

It seems that these days a minister who has grievously offended finds himself, as he climbs the stairs of the establishment, pleasantly engaged in conversation by a senior civil servant. But just before they reach their des-

class undertaker or medical consultant.

Looking floorwards, he lets drop the formula. "I'm afraid it's bad news, Minister."

The new etiquette book would tell the minister how to respond gracefully. For that one observation lets him know the decision is already cut-and-dried, that there is no point in kicking up a fuss about it, and that once in the presence he might as well go quietly. tination, the courteous usher assumes the Despite the supercharged quality of his feel-

Mrs Thatcher has now sacked, or induced the resignation of, at least 15 front-rank poli-

ticians. Her rate of dismissal has been such that the disaffected can now fairly claim there is more genuine ministerial timber on the Tory back-benches than in the Government. Some of the partings have been nastier than others but a significant thread does seem to run through most of them.

This Prime Minister does not merely sack

failures-indeed certain personable failures have been cherished. The victims' most obvious common characteristics are said to be independence, lack of personal devotion to the PM and readiness to dissent.

This strand was present in previous adminstrations, both Labour and Conservative, but much more muted, partly because of what was seen as the need to preserve a coalition of interests. In a strongly ideological government, this constraint scarcely applies. And Mrs Thatcher's own nature seems impatient to the point of ruthlessness with any, or even any suspected, deviation.

She does not take prisoners in her professional dealings. On one level this is hard to understand, for recognition of her achievement is strong even among her critics. Her status as the heroine of the Falklands war is secure. While under her the country has managed to take advantage of its oil revenues to invest heavily overseas and reduce borrowing until we have a satisfactory credit rating.

High unemployment and the consequent decline in trade union power have had undeniable economic advantages for some, though at what others consider an unnerving social risk. There is no equivocation whatever about her success as an electioneer. Given the reassurance that success can bring, it is hard to reconcile the extraordinary instability of her relations with government colleagues.

The first to fall in January, 1981 was the Arts Minister Norman St John-Stevas, who made the mistake of dubbing the Prime Minister "The Leaderene" and thinking she would appreciate the joke.

She may shortly be rid of John Wakeham, her Chief Whip of many years standing, brought in to replace the damned and anathematized John Biffen as Leader of the House. It is felt that Wakeham blundered on a radio programme during the election, and he has not been forgiven his opposition to the dual appointment of Lord Young, a special favourite, to the party chairmanship and the

Department of Trade. "Oh, yes, John's on the skids," said one of his many former Cabinet

Between times ministers have gone out like last year's hats. Stevas's departure was followed in September, 1981 by the massacre of the "wets"-Ian Gilmour and Christopher Soames among them. Jim Prior was demoted to Northern Ireland, an ante-room to political

Interestingly, the September massacre took place after Mrs Thatcher had suffered a heavy rebuff over public expenditure during the summer, "She lost the argument in Cabinet," said one of the victims, "and fired us all in the autumn." Generosity and co-existence are great virtues when political parties take in a broad coalition of opinion. Mrs Thatcher's first sackings, more than any campaign rhetoric, made it clear that a new era in politics had

Once she has made up her mind there is rarely much sweet sorrow in the actual severance. "Francis, I want a new Foreign Secretary," heralded the departure of Francis Pym, insufficiently bellicose during the Falklands war perhaps because he had personally served under fire as a soldier. When this was combined with his obvious hankering for an emollient brand of Conservatism, he could hardly expect forgiveness.

Leon Brittan and Michael Heseltine fell together over the Westland affair. More pre-

cisely, Heseltine withdrew to a prepared position for another war which we have yet to see, while Brittan, over-zealous in the Prime Minister's cause, received his wounds in the back. Behind Heseltine's abrupt departure, widely but incorrectly seen as a romantic impulse, was a shrewd assessment that Mrs Thatcher was not trying to inflict a simple defeat on him over an aspect of aircraft industry policy, but to effect his political humiliation.

Had he stayed on, according to his intimates, there would have been a greasing of the chute for his departure on the Prime Minister's terms. As one put it, "Bernard would have been out in the lobbies explaining that Michael was no good for the Government.'

The "Bernard" is Bernard Ingham, the Prime Minister's press officer, whose role is often crucial in these operations. Ministers may hear of their hovering fate not from highly placed colleagues but from newspapers which Ingham, as a supposedly non-attributable source on Mrs Thatcher's innermost thoughts, is uniquely wellequipped to manipulate.

Patrick Jenkin had a rough political ride as Environment Minister, ramming through Mrs Thatcher's own pet political project, the abolition of the Greater London Council. But his end was signalled in an unsentimental way-through the columns of the Press

Victims of this newspaper technique testify to its unpleasant nature. It is made harder by the fact that Bernard Ingham, a brutal Yorkshireman who was once deputy labour correspondent of The Guardian, seems actually to

relish the insensitive nature of the work. Ingham was to the fore in the Westland episode, for both what he did and did not say about it. He was the man who ordered the leaking of the Solicitor-General's legal opinion, so damaging to the Heseltine interest, through the Department of Trade. Political observers were asked to believe that this leaking, through Mrs Thatcher's most trusted cohort who was to be protected from the Commons Select Committee investigating the affair, took place without her knowledge.

This is even harder to believe now than it was at the time, but at the time someone other than the Prime Minister had to be found to shoulder the blame. Leon Brittan, across whose desk and consciousness the communication had passed and who had been Mrs Thatcher's close ally in the whole conflict, died the surrogate death.

The disturbing point about Westland is that two leading ministers were shed as a result of a row that need never have taken place. Had Mrs Thatcher not attempted to throttle in subcommittee Heseltine's initiative for a European—as opposed to an American—solution for the helicopter company's troubles, she would have won comfortably in Cabinet and

or wrongly, her official advisers tend to regard such consultations as panicky, and the hodcarriers of paranoia.

The right-wing businessman David Hart, who often favours the new Times with his opinions, is in the circle. Astonishingly, Jeffrey Archer—an object of hilarity and fastidious distaste to mainstream Tory politicians—seems to be another. There is Lord McAlpine, her Party fund-raiser. There is the sleek figure of

Michael Richardson of Rothschilds, evidently very much the flavour of the month, and of course there is Tim Bell, late of Saatchi and Saatchi. More urbanely, there is Sir Gordon Reece, the man who originally improved the Prime Minister's vowels and ditched her hats.

A situation substantially worse exists than prevailed in the days of Harold Wilson's kitchen cabinet. The taste of Prime Ministers for unsuitable friends, the human equivalent of wearing a bookie's overcoat, never ceases to amaze but no one in the Wilson government seriously feared the adverse judgment of Joe Kagan or Eric Miller. Our press being a much less independent entity these days, the Wilson circle received far more hostile attention than does Mrs Thatcher's group.

Precisely where private advice leaves off and where Mrs Thatcher's own instincts take over is hard to say. But certainly the influence of Tim Bell and others played a part in the retrospectively extraordinary collapse of nerve that gripped the Prime Minister half-way through the General Election. The outcome was Wobble Thursday when Mrs Thatcher had the dread vision of Neil Kinnock installed in Number 10, and this led to a further rolling of heads.

The reasons for it now seem flimsy: a maverick poll from Gallup which had been fallible before, plus a workmanlike public performance by Labour and Neil Kinnock personally. But the poll of polls at no time showed the Tories doing anything but winning handsomely. Her advisers at Saatchis had correctly recommended that defence be made the central plank in the Tory case.

They had also anticipated Labour's emphasis on the personal strengths of its leader.

There are, however, no rewards at court for being right if the advice is unpalatable. Charles and Maurice Saatchi were attacked, obliquely at first, for complacency. Attacks on the Saatchi brothers subtly turned into attacks on party chairman Norman Tebbit, who was thought to be intolerably sanguine about the election. "Francis, I want a new Foreign Secretary" was to become "Maurice and Charles, I want a new advertising agency" and "Norman, I want a new chairman.'

In fact, the Saatchi/Tebbit analysis that the Tories were nicely ahead, that Labour was rightly pushing the personality of its leader but that steady fire on its hapless defence position

THE DISCARDED CABINET 1979-1987

MARK CARLISLE

Secretary of State for Education & Science: May 5, 1979-September 14, 1981.

SIR IAN GILMOUR

Lord Privy Seal: May 5, 1979-September 14, 1981.

NORMAN ST JOHN-STEVAS

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster: May 5, 1979-January 5, 1981.

LORD SOAMES

Lord President of the Council: May 5, 1979-September 14, 1981.

DAVID HOWELL

Secretary of State for Energy: May 5, 1979-September 14, 1981/ Secretary of State for Transport: until June 11, 1983.

FRANCIS PYM

Secretary of State for Defence: May 5, 1979-January 5, 1981/Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster & Postmaster General: until September 14, 1981/Lord President of the Council: until April 5, 1982/Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs: until June 11, 1983.

Secretary of State for Employment: May 5, 1979-September 14, 1981/Secretary of State for Northern Ireland: until September 11,

PATRICK JENKIN

Secretary of State for Social Services: May 5, 1979-September 14, 1981/Secretary of State for Industry: until June 11, 1983/Secretary of State for the Environment: until September 2, 1985.

LEON BRITTAN

Chief Secretary of the Treasury: January 5, 1979-June 11, 1983/ Secretary of State for the Home Office: until September 2, 1985/ Secretary of State for Trade & Industry: until January 25, 1986.

MICHAEL HESELTINE

Secretary of State for the Environment: May 5, 1979-January 6, 1983/Secretary of State for Defence: until January 6, 1986.

JOHN BIFFEN

Chief Secretary of the Treasury: May 5, 1979-January 5, 1981/Secretary of State for Trade: until April 6, 1982/Lord President of the Council: until June 11, 1983/Lord Privy Seal: until June 13, 1987.

NICHOLAS EDWARDS

Secretary of State for Wales: May 5, 1979-June 13, 1987.

MICHAEL JOPLING

Secretary of State for Agriculture, Fisheries & Food: June 11, 1983-June 13, 1987.

PETER REES

Chief Secretary of the Treasury: June 11, 1983-June 13, 1987.

NORMAN TEBBIT

Secretary of State for Employment: September 14, 1981-October 16, 1983/Secretary of State for Trade & Industry: until September 2, 1985/Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster: until June 13, 1987.

> her Defence Minister's pride would have been left intact. As it was, confronted by a strong and resourceful opponent, she almost crashed her Government in a frantic and unscrupulous struggle to down him at all costs.

> Mrs Thatcher is at her best in genuine crisis but in times of political peace she seems to feel the need to conjure up crises that barely exist. This need finds expression in her relationships with ministers, and not only ministers. For the process of falling-out with Cabinet colleagues or, in the case of Leon Brittan, using them as hardcore on a private royal road, is allied to something else—the unpredictable influence of her unofficial advisers.

There are many reports of scurrying calls late at night to a circle of private contacts. Rightly would be deeply rewarding, was justified and appropriate to the victory won. Mrs Thatcher's panic, allegedly encouraged by Bell and David Young, was reflected in a splurge of late Tory advertisements which were thought to be irrelevant to the election result and were not rated highly.

Tebbit's departure is perhaps the most revealing of them all. It is one thing to quarrel with Ian Gilmour or Jim Prior. They do, after all, believe in a different sort of Conservatism. With Pym there had been conflict. Heseltine was seen as a candidate for the crown. But Norman Tebbit was supposed to be the Prime Minister's other self. He had been court favourite. A bone-dry, avenging son of the North London lower middle classes, against gentlemanly politics because, as he had once told his selection committee in Epping, "I am no gentleman." He was also the flair performer, one of the rare politicians with a dancing improvised wit.

Tebbit went at his own bidding and a glaze of civility has been put over the proceedings. But he left after disagreement with the Prime Minister and the withdrawal of her trust in him over a matter in which he had served her well.

The election also marked the final ostracism of John Biffen, one of the best leaders of the House of Commons in decades. Like Tebbit, Biffen was comfortable with Thatcherite economics, indeed he was among its inventors. His fatal dissent was over a libertarian issue.

Biffen had pressed for a civilized compromise from strength on the question of union representation at GCHQ. The union involved was not on the physical premises; it had offered a package of 24-hour working and a no-strike agreement, and even so right-wing a trade unionist as the Electricians' Eric Hammond was outraged that the Government should insist upon suppression. Biffen argued hardest in Cabinet for compromise—which the majority favoured—and, according to one observer, was slapped into silence for his pains.

When Biffen was subsequently provoked into voicing remarks critical of Government policy, Bernard Ingham was soon stalking the lobbies with the word that Biffen was becoming "semi-detached" from the Government.

It is a curious record. While earlier dismissals seem to have been on ideological grounds, the more recent culling does not seem to have been prompted by any deep policy motives but on minor disagreements fitfully inflated.

There is undoubtedly an element of deep self-doubt and insecurity. More than can ever be good for her, this Prime Minister seems to need sycophants. The idea that perhaps she enjoyed give and take and someone standing up to her was greeted by one of the Cabinet victims with hollow, gurgling hilarity.

Unlikely people such as Archer and Hart, more serious ones such as Richardson, give her this warm bath of bliss-inducing admiration. They are, of course, unequal partners, and those who live to please must please to live. They, the sycophants, the hangers-on, the courtiers, play their uncharted part in her anxieties, while Cecil Parkinson and David Young have, exceptionally, bridged the gulf between sycophant and minister.

Ministers who cannot play that game can feel only trepidation, particularly when they observe the fascinating assembly of men of stature prematurely discarded on the backbenches. Under the circumstances it is hardly surprising that Mrs Thatcher has managed to turn her Cabinet into a nervous gaggle of clones trying too hard to agree with her.

The next man or the next but one into the Cabinet will be Michael Howard. He is very clever, quite nice, a touch insecure himself and determined to pursue one favourite policy of the Prime Minister's even more fervently than she would herself. He is promoting the poll tax, a mechanism sent by the gods to put heart into the opposition. The art of criticism is almost lost. The voice of constructive doubt, saying "Is this a good idea? Ought we to be doing it?", now sounds like second cousin to treason.

For some of those heavyweights on the backbenches the political air has grown unwholesome. They see panic, flattery, favouritism and the chilling withdrawal of favour combining to produce an administration less like a modern government and more like an Elizabethan court. They see themselves suffering a similar fate to Archbishop Grindal who advised Queen Elizabeth I to "Remember madam that you are a mortal creature", and wound up in the Tower.

The parallels can be overdrawn. There are no displaced ministers of Mrs Thatcher's Government on iron rations or under lock and key, but there is no doubt that dissent, even in the smallest things, has gone back to the top of the list of political crimes \bigcirc

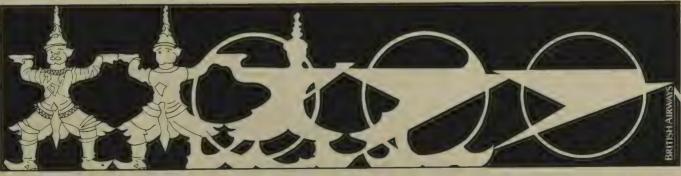
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THE YELLOW TIE

It was a talisman of power, but an object of fascination and ridicule for Peter Koenig until the night he wore one himself

I SAW my first yellow tie in my office. It was on my desk one morning when I arrived for work. Nothing on my desk had been disturbed, but there it was. I assumed a colleague from out of town had used my phone the night before, and left it behind, rushing out for dinner or a drink.

The tie was clean, but there was something unwholesome about it. The yellow was pale but assertive, sickly. Overlaying the yellow was a pattern of small, brutal, black diamonds. This, I thought, lifting it from my desk, is the tie of a man with whom I have nothing in common—someone from our Madrid office who wears a blazer over his shoulders so that his empty sleeves flap in the breeze. Or someone from New York, all brass, with a voice that penetrates reinforced concrete. A man of talcum powder given to men's purses or, alternatively, a man of cigars who goes out in the night in strange cities in search of sexual adventure.

The tie's owner never identified himself, however. No one ever claimed it. So the tie got shunted from my desk to a filing cabinet on top of which it collected dust for months except for the morning when I spilled tea and used it as a mop. Then a colleague from New York appeared in my office and saw the tie.

"Hey, hey, hey!" he said. "What's this?"

"Your tie?"

"Not mine, babe," he said.

"Not mine, either. Someone left it. Can I give it to you?"

"Come on, confess," he said. My colleague from New York held up the tie and grinned. "It's yours, isn't it?"

"Why would I say it isn't if it is?"

"Because I got you, babe. A man of culture and all that. Red-handed. Because you're mortified, babe."

"What are you talking about?"

"Owning this tie, babe." My American colleague shook it at me. "Yellow," he said. "Power." My American colleague cupped his hands and howled into them. "P-o-w-e-r!"

Some time ago, before the word yuppie entered our vocabulary, a book was published in the United States called *Dress for Success*. I saw this book in airport shops, and assumed it was for women. I was wrong. The book was for both sexes, and the advice for its male readers included the tip that men who wore yellow ties radiated an aura of power. This was, obviously, cheap pop psychology hitched onto the self-improvement business in the US, which has been given fresh impetus by the fear of failure that a crumbling economy has loaded onto the American managerial class.

Apparently, however, the American men who read this book took it literally and went out and bought enough yellow ties to give the shares of companies producing yellow dye a flutter on the exchanges.

The time of which I speak, when the yellow tie appeared in my office, was 1984. Not long after my colleague from New York appeared in my office and filled me in on its significance, I went to New York myself. There, as they say, my eyes were opened. Everywhere I looked, from the baggage-claim area at John F. Kennedy airport to Four Seasons at lunch, I saw yellow ties. I took this up with an American friend who politely, without putting it in so many words, explained that my horrified reaction was old hat: that the ground I was covering had already been covered by newspaper humorists, and was the stuff of stale cocktail-party chatter.

"Lighten up," my American friend said.

"What's that mean?"

"Stop fighting it."

"What's 'it'?"

My American friend asked me what I was doing for dinner that night. When I said I had no plans, he invited me home. "I want to show you something," he said.

We met at Grand Central at the height of the evening rush hour, the railway station's great concourse echoing with the sound of the shuffling feet of thousands of whipped, homeward-bound commuters. I was first, and amused myself counting yellow ties. Fifty-nine: plain yellow, patterned yellow, discreet, vulgar, wide, thin, long, short, silk and polyester.

My friend arrived and we made for the New Haven line's Westport Express, going directly to the bar car. I remembered the bar cars of New York's commuter trains as grotty, rolling dens of American masculinity: noisy, sticky underfoot, rude retreats from the day's combat. The bar car was all that that night, but yellow in cast, as if the windows were tinted.

The yellow cast, of course, came from the ties hanging from multiple necks in the bar car, none of whose owners looked the least bit sheepish or even self-conscious. Yet the sight would have made a feminist laugh. The conformity of those "power ties"—the obedience they signalled to the dictates of mass culture—robbed their owners of any potential aura of power they might have mustered. You get a similar effect at stag nights in the City. Five hundred men got up in identical evening attire drinking, smoking and bellowing at each other do not look masculine. They look like biddies at a hen party.

"Why do they do it?" I asked my friend. He pulled a Paul Stuart box from his briefcase. "A present," he said. "For you."

I opened the box, and inside was a yellow tie—a nice one. "I can't accept this," I said. "And besides, although it may sound ungracious, I already have one."

"Try it on, anyway," said my American friend. "The more you get into them, the more you get used to them."

I returned to London, gave the Paul Stuart tie to my brother-in-law as a Christmas present, and moved on to other things. Soon, however, I began noticing the damn things again—here, on this side of the Atlantic. Americans in London were making themselves ridiculous not only with trousers that rode above their ankles, but also with power ties.

I mentioned this to friends. "Bloody Big Bang! Now the Americans are infecting us with their yellow-tie culture." But my friends are laissez-faire. If the Yanks want to wear yellow ties, let them, was their mood.

By the beginning of this year, however, we had reached a new stage. London was filling up with yellow ties and it wasn't only the foreigners who were wearing them. I saw the double of Norman Tebbit step out of a Daimler wearing a yellow tie, and so was his chauffeur. There appeared to be a hollowness at the core of things, and in this hollowness a new culture was breeding—a culture which said that if you wore a yellow tie to your office, you would get ahead in your job.

My closest brush with the yellow-tie culture came several weeks before the stock market crash. I was behind at work. I went to my office early, without dressing properly, and told my family I would be back late. About four my secretary rang through to tell me my appointment had arrived.

"What appointment?"

"A Mrs Gotham-Hall."

"I don't know a Mrs Gotham-Hall, Helena," I told my secretary.

"From SEBOC."

"Christ!" I had not noted it down in my diary and had forgotten. SEBOC was a market-research agency. My opinion on the international business media was to be solicited.

"I haven't shaved," I said. "I'm not presentable."

"Mrs Gotham-Hall is," Helena said, "Very smart, indeed."

"Tell her to come back," I said. "Tell her yourself," Helena said.

Mrs Gotham-Hall was both pushy and unfazed. She dismissed my apologies for my appearance and my suggestion that we reschedule. "I love designer stubble," she said.

"Designer stubble?"

"Your growth."

"My growth?"

She rubbed my beard lightly. "I promise I won't take more than 20 minutes," she said. "Girl guides' honour."

Mrs Gotham-Hall was not kittenish. She was in her late 30s, I would say. She was not bold in the sense that she would make a move if there was no context for one. But she was tinglingly alert.

I led her back to my office. She produced a notepad, cassette recorder and a deck of over-

"You're going to record this?"

"Some of our clients can't read," Mrs Gotham-Hall said, and laughed at her own joke.

The cards were visual aids, in case I couldn't think. The questions were straightforward. Mrs Gotham-Hall might have finished in 20 minutes



had she not kept pausing to toss her expensively highlighted hair.

Twenty minutes to the dot after we started the exercise, Mrs Gotham-Hall looked at her wristwatch. "Oh dear," she said, "We're not through."

"Maybe we could finish on the 'phone. Next week.'

"The cards," Mrs Gotham-Hall said.

"Are they necessary?"

"I'm afraid so. The interviews. The method must be consistent."

"Well, I'm sorry, but. . ."

"How late are you working tonight?" Mrs Gotham-Hall inquired.

"Very, I'm afraid."

"Tennish?"

"Possibly."

"I'll pick you up," Mrs Gotham-Hall said. "We'll finish then."

"Pick me up?"

"Why not?" Mrs Gotham-Hall said.

A little after 10pm the security guard in the lobby buzzed. "Taxi, sir."

I went down, got in the taxi, and found Mrs Gotham-Hall in the back seat. "Do you have a tie?" she asked.

"No," I said. "Yes. Just a moment."

I returned to my office, and found the yellow tie on top of my filing cabinet. By buttoning my jacket I could hide the tea stains on its tip. Back in the taxi, Mrs Gotham-Hall directed the driver to Covent Garden. She took me to a club—one, apparently, that required men to wear ties, but required little else. The place was in uproar. Toned-down versions of dressed-up punk women laughed hysterically. Men with pink complexions in wrinkled pinstripe suits butted heads. The place pulsed with a lewd, adrenal energy.

Mrs Gotham-Hall was on good terms with the maître d'. We were seated in a booth with high-gloss black vinyl banquettes. The table separating us was covered in a post-modern peach cloth. "Love your tie," Mrs Gotham-Hall said.

I looked around. "How could you?" I asked. "It's just like every other tie in the place."

"No, it's not," she said. "It's a classic."

A waiter appeared. Dressed in black. Earring. Bleached blond crewcut with a 50s quiff.

"A strawberry daiquiri, Bill," Gotham-Hall said. "Intense," said the waiter. He looked at me.

"Two strawberry daiquiris."

"Excellent!" said Mrs Gotham-Hall. "And, Bill, some of those yummy cheesesticks, please." She smiled at me. "I'm absolutely famished. You must be too, poor dear.

Mrs Gotham-Hall produced her interviewing paraphernalia. "I don't know if I'm in the mood," she said. "When the major is out of the country, something inside me just . . . slips."

"The major? Your husband?"

"The beast," she said. "Are you married?" I said that I was.

"Children?"

"A boy."

Mrs Gotham-Hall nodded. "Happy?"

"Quite."

"Would it surprise you if I said I wasn't?" she asked. She freshened her lipstick, pink against a dark skin, applying it as she appraised herself in her compact.

"Not exactly."

"I met the major in Cyprus," Mrs Gotham-Hall said. "I'm Greek." This explained her peculiar drawl. "He brought me back here. We lived in Chelsea. I loved it. Then we moved to the country. I detest it. I am not a farm girl. And the isolation. The major is gone half of the time. God knows what he gets up to."

"Probably nothing."

She snorted. "How would you know?" "I wouldn't."

Mrs Gotham-Hall eyed me critically. There was an air of raw grievance about her. "I don't need the money, you know. I do this to meet people. I sat out on that mudhole of a farm for a year, and nearly lost my mind.'

"Your job," I said. "Do you enjoy it?"

She excused herself, edging out from between the table and banquette. When she had gone, I took a deep breath. I had clearly made a mistake. The task now was to extricate myself.

Mrs Gotham-Hall returned, and sat down next to me on my banquette. She smelt strongly of perfume. "You're not drinking," she said, and took a sip of my strawberry daiquiri before ordering two more. She took hold of my tie. "Let's dance," she said.

We danced.

Returning to our table, Mrs Gotham-Hall started giggling. "Do you know why that tie suits you?" she asked.

"Why?"

"Because you're resisting it."

"How can you tell?"

"Am I right or am I wrong?" she demanded.

"I don't know."

"You are," she said, and, yanking on the tie, pulled me in her direction, and kissed me on the

Mrs Gotham-Hall sat back down, and I excused myself. Jesus! How was I to formulate an exit line? Or maybe skip the exit line, and

I returned to the table from the men's room, threading through the packed humanity, having decided to say that I was going without bothering to give an excuse. When I got to the table, however, Mrs Gotham-Hall had gone. She, not me. So much for fending her off. I didn't measure up, and she ditched me.

I sat back down at the table. I don't know why. I scanned the club for her. I asked myself what I would do if I found her. But then I was interrupted. A hand reached from under the post-modern peach cloth. "Stop resisting!" I heard Mrs Gotham-Hall whisper.

I almost did. Then I took off my tie, laid it down and rose to go. "I'll give you a bell," Mrs Gotham-Hall said from under the table. I made my way out onto the street and got a cab.

Three weeks later the stock market crash came. Since then I have seen fewer yellow ties out and about. And I have yet to hear from Mrs Gotham-Hall



UMBRIAN MAGIC

Henry Porter opens a special travel section with recollections of an unspoilt region of Italy which has a turbulent past

"THE RACE of the Candles takes place in Gubbio every May in remembrance of Saint Ubaldo." That is the concluding sentence in a brief entry for the town of Gubbio in a guide book to Umbria. It is a very dull, very bad guide book, for the Corsa dei Ceri, as it is known in Italian, is one of the wildest and most bewildering celebrations that you are ever likely to witness.

True, there is a race (on May 15, to be precise) and Saint Ubaldo is vaguely connected with it, but that is as far as it goes. The race is not properly a race because for centuries it has been agreed that the same team wins. The candles are not candles, but massive wooden structures born on huge stretchers. And the event probably has nothing whatsoever to do with Ubaldo, although he did save Gubbio from defeat in 1151 and has since been considered a good sort by the townsfolk.

The Corsa dei Ceri is a pointless, wonderful, barmy expression of exuberance and its form almost certainly dates beyond Ubaldo's lifetime to a pagan era when gods lived at the top of mountains and were placated by humans who journeyed to their domain to make offerings. In fact the Corsa mirrors precisely this ancient activity. The "race" is run up the mountain behind Gubbio and it ends at the domain, not of gods, but of monks.

It starts in the late afternoon, by which time the people of Gubbio are in a high pitch of excitement. The Ceri, each bearing the emblems of three saints, and the teams, traditionally drawn from local farmers, merchants and masons, are blessed outside the cathedral by the bishop. Then they set off through the town pursued by upwards of 1,000 people and a din that only feverish Italians are capable of producing

The first time I went to the Corsa was in 1972 when I lived at Perugia. I had expected that it would be cancelled because of a heavy storm. But far from deterring the Italians, the storm

seemed to add to their enjoyment, and as thousands of black umbrellas were produced in the premature dusk, one was reminded of a scene from a Fellini film. The Italians' acute sense of decorum vanishes in the wake of the Ceri; nuns and bank managers elbow each other out of the way; children are separated from their parents; and the elderly, black-clad women of the peasantry behave like football

fans.

It took a great deal longer for the Ceri to reach their objective, the Monastery of Sant' Ubaldo, than I had expected. But then the business of carrying these vast structures up

E Umbrian landscape: a priest in the hills above the town of Assisi

a wet, gravelly track is extremely arduous, even though the teams were replenished by new members half-way up the mountain.

When they reached the monastery, the doors were opened to reveal a tiny cloister containing some beaming monks. There was a good deal of sweaty embracing between the brothers and the Ceri bearers, who were in many instances related. Parcels were delivered, drink was produced and suddenly this most religious of buildings acquired the atmosphere of a cocktail party in full flight.

By about nine in the evening the crowd began to return to the town and Ceri bearers began the less exciting but no less difficult descent. We found the bars and restaurants full of the people of Gubbio setting about the plum purple wine of the region with a rare singularity of purpose.

The point about the festival in Gubbio is that it is completely free of tourists. You see the Umbrian in his natural state. On the outside he is a more formal creature than most Italians: quiet, acquisitive and bourgeois. Beneath this, however, is a delightful madness which exhibits itself at religious festivals, political rallies and football matches. He also has a love of practical jokes which made my stay at Perugia University doubly enjoyable.

The standard joke, which gave me hours of entertainment as a spectator, was to tie a 10,000 lire note to a piece of fishing line and to let it flutter across the main square. The game had much of the pleasure of fishing, except you struck before the bait was taken.

I recommend Umbria, rather than Tuscany, because I believe it to be far more beautiful and less spoilt. Of course Umbria has its share of ribbon development and bad, modern architecture but this is easily ignored. At any time of the year the Umbrian landscape is wonderful and the light that fills the lowlands between the towns of Gubbio, Assisi and Perugia is completely individual to the region.

Umbria does not possess the antiquities of Rome nor the Renaissance treasures of Florence, but it does contain some of the best medieval architecture and painting in Europe and it has the remains of the Etruscan civilization which was subsumed by the Roman empire. The best place to acquire knowledge of both is Perugia, which has an excellent art gallery and a museum devoted to the Etruscan era. It is also the right place to learn about the turbulent and gory history of central Italy.

The Perugians, now known for their chocolate, were a very violent people who gained a reputation all over Europe for the swiftness and discretion of their poisons. For most of the Middle Ages the Perugians were at war with neighbouring city states but when there was no hostile army to hand they turned on each other. On one occasion 137 people were killed in a dispute between two families. On another the Perugian leader, Michelotti Biordo, was stabbed to death by a priest who had come to his house to present his good wishes for Biordo's imminent marriage (at the time the priest's colleague was preaching a sermon in the cathedral on brotherly love).

At night in Perugia it is not difficult to sense this bloody past. The Corso Vanucci, the wide main street that rides the top of Perugia's hill is especially sombre, flanked as it is by a huge medieval building and the black openings of alleyways that plunge and wind away from the centre. At one end of the Corso is the austere cathedral, a quarter of it clad in marble, and at the other a little park where lovers neck and pretend to look at the view.

During the day the Corso is the scene of a ritual called the *passeggiata* which is still an important part of life in most Italian towns. Put simply, it is a parade which starts at 6pm (or a little earlier in the winter) and finishes at about 8pm. The Perugians walk up and down, showing off their babies, flirting, gossiping, arguing and displaying their new clothes. It is a

wonderful institution, and after several months of living in the city I became addicted to watching the procession of finery. I once asked my friend Bipo about the conspicuous vanity of it all. He looked very grave and replied carefully as if teaching a child to talk: "What you English do not understand is that when a man dresses well it shows that he has self respect."

The Perugians also respect their stomachs, and the food on offer in the most modest of the town's tavernas is much better than in the best Italian restaurants in London. It must be something to do with the proximity between the kitchen and the raw materials, but there is also a rare spirit of experimentation in the better restaurants, like Falchetto on

Girls of Assisi dressed in medieval costume for the May Day festival





Gitta di Castello near Assisi. "The light that fills the lowlands between Gubbio, Assisi and Perugia is completely individual to the region"

Via Bartolo. I especially recommend the local gnocchi, which are made from pasta and potatoes, and a dish of wild strawberries served with basil.

Something that occurs to very few visitors to Italy is to walk from town to town. This is, of course, out of the question in the summer, but in the spring, when the unsprayed fields are full of wild flowers, or in the autumn, when the vines are yellow, there can be few better ways of taking a holiday. Bipo and I once set out to walk from Perugia to Assisi (about 18 kilometres) but 3 kilometres out of Perugia, Bipo decided that he was not one of nature's walkers and we hitch-hiked back to Perugia to be greeted contemptuously in Bipo's regular bar. On the next day we hired a scooter and made the trip to see the great frescoes by Giotto at Assisi.

It is difficult to persuade people about the quality of Giotto's Life of St Francis in the basilica. To the modern eye this pictorial biography seems gauche and inadequate, charming in its naïvety perhaps, but fundamentally uninteresting. This is because few appreciate the importance of Giotto's innovation or comprehend the way in which the Middle Ages marvelled at the story he told. It is difficult to find a modern equivalent because we tend to wonder at technological, rather than artistic, discovery. Suffice to say that in the Basilica of St Francis you may witness the first awakening of humanism that inspired the Renaissance and challenged the church's authority, which is ironic when you consider Giotto's only purpose was religious.

Assisi is still a holy place and is constantly besieged by pilgrim peasants and foreign tourists who step from their air-conditioned coaches in bermuda shorts to look at one of the great marvels of medieval Europe through the view-finders of video cameras. The church authorities do place some restriction on clothes and the use of cameras, particularly in the crypt, where the blackened body of St Clare lies in a glass coffin guarded by an equally immobile member of her order.

Assisi is a place for a day-long visit and not an overnight stay. I am certain hotels like the Umbra are good, and the town is architecturally unspoilt. But the place is dominated by the souvenir business. You can buy a representation of St Francis's visit to Rome, statuettes of St Clare that light up, bath towels featuring the basilica, and pictures of St Francis preaching to the birds which move when you change the angle you look from. I should mention that Bipo, who had lectured me on the feebleness of British art and the poverty of the Protestant imagination, bought a St Francis egg-timer.

One thing I should recommend about Assisi is the extraordinary view from the town over the plain. I never understand why guide books fail to mention it. Perhaps it is because so many of them are the result of assiduous plagiarism conducted behind the closed doors of the publishing houses. Nevertheless the view, whatever the season or weather, is one of the most remarkable in a country of views. It seems strange today that Giotto must have seen it while working in Assisi and yet he walked into the basilica and painted not what he had perceived but what he imagined a landscape looked like.

Bipo and I also visited Orvieto together, though at the time I suspected Bipo's interests in coming were rather less cultural than mine. He had learnt that a Yugoslavian student named Marina Radulovic, a woman of striking contours and geniality, was to accompany me. Bipo dropped his plans for a communist uprising in Perugia that weekend and boarded the train with us. Much of the journey was spent impressing Marina with his knowledge of Dante and the rest conveying to me in conspiratorial whispers his plan for missing the train back to Perugia. I was instructed to lose myself in the early evening and catch the train, while he would delay Marina and thus be stranded with her in Orvieto for the night. In

Nuns in a church portal, Assisi; and exterior





The towns of Umbria may be besieged by tourists, but the surrounding landscape is unspoilt. The region has a resonance of the Middle Ages

the event Bipo got separated from us and was stranded in Orvieto by himself.

Orvieto is situated on a remarkable pedestal of rock and was originally, like Perugia, an Etruscan fortress. Owing to its elevation it cannot expand, and much of what you see today is the original medieval town. It is best to contrive an approach to Orvieto from the west because you are rewarded with an astonishing view of the city which is reminiscent of El

Greco's picture of Toledo. Most visitors, however, simply drop off the autostrada, which passes directly beneath the city, and climb the road that winds round the stump of rock.

The great sight, in fact the only real sight, in Orvieto is the cathedral, which was built in the 14th century to commemorate a miracle that took place close to the town in 1263. Happily it occurred when Pope Urban IV was staying in Orvieto at his summer residence, and immedi-

ately the miracle was recognized plans were laid for the construction of one of the great buildings of Europe. The miracle itself is a simple story and by no means rare in the mythology of the Middle Ages. It concerned a Bohemian priest who was travelling from Prague to Rome in order to ease his doubts about his religion. Try as he might, he could not believe that the eucharist was transformed into the body of Christ during communion. One morning, in the church of Santa Cristina overlooking Lake Bolsena, he celebrated mass. When he broke the bread drops of blood cascaded on to the altar cloth.

News of the miracle spread quickly and the Pope ordered that the evidence of God's sign, which came conveniently at a time of great doubt and ecclesiastical upheaval, should be transferred to Orvieto. After much argument and debate, the foundations of the cathedral were laid at the end of the 13th century. Fortunately it was completed before the great plague of 1348 in which nine out of every 10 citizens in Orvieto died during the summer. As a chronicler of the time recorded: "So dreadful was the mortality and the people so dismayed that they died suddenly; one morning they were in good health, the next they were dead. All the shops of the artisans were closed and so it continued into September, by which time many houses and families were without heirs.

It may be that I have concentrated too much here on the Middle Ages but I find the more I visit Umbria the more one picks up the resonance of that tumultuous, creative and superstitious era. There may be discothèques in 13th-century cellars, there may be souvenir tat in every shop, and the Italian obsession with motorbikes may spoil the peace, but Umbria is still very beautiful and mysterious \bigcirc

and interior details of Orvieto's 14th-century cathedral, built to commemorate a miracle



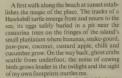


NEWS FROM ARIDE

Alex Finer visits the world's largest breeding colony of Lesser Noddies on their noisy Indian Ocean paradise in the Sevchelles

I ARRIVED on Aride by pirogue through mounting seas. The flat wooden boat with its straining outboard sat low in the water, weighed down by sacks of ice and half of the island's population of eight adults returning from the market on Praslin.

In the 6 mile divide between the two islands, unprotected from the heaving Indian Ocean, the pirogue was hit sideways by an errant wave. The boatman's toothy grin evaporated. A second wave caused him to abandon his bottle of Seybrew beer; and when the third wave earnest. The rising westerly wind might have been blowing across 1,000 miles of open sea from the shores of Africa. Fortunately our destination was in sight and looming larger.



Aride, a mile long by just 1 mile wide, is one crashed over the side, he began bailing in of more than 100 scattered islands in the granitic Seychelles archipelago, just south of the Equator, whose total landmass amounts to less than the Isle of Wight. The main island of Mahé, the principal destination for tourists,

lacked an international airport until the 1970s. Some outer islands such as Frigate now offer plantation-house accommodation for the few who fly on in 10-seater planes to land on a grass airstrip and enjoy idyllic surroundings with a modicum of mod cons. There are no such facilities on Aride. It is, however, the very isolation and relative inaccessibility of the island which has helped to make it, along with Aldabra some 700 miles farther south, one of the world's most important bird reserves.

Aride is one of the few spots on earth free from rats. Safe from this voracious predator, land-nesting sea-birds can breed and multiply. The shearwaters lay their single eggs in burrows, Common (Brown) Noddies on rocks and Fairy Terns on the open branches of the indigenous tropical woodland. Only the island's marauding skinks who will headbutt deserted eggs, present a threat; and man, who will poach eggs and birds to eniov traditional Seychellois

More than a million seabirds of 10 different species nest on Aride. They include the world's largest Top, Fairy Tern and egg; above, a pair of Lesser Noddies breeding colony of Lesser (Black) Noddies, and huge colonies of

Ruth, the island's only woman, was still White-Tailed Tropicbirds and Roseate Terns. It is also the only permanent roosting site of the huge Frigate birds which sport 6 to 9 foot wingspans and more than a passing resemblance to pterodactyls. These birds, unable to dive for their own fish in case they get their feathers wet, hover on the thermals, waiting to attack smaller birds which obligingly disgorge their catch so that the Frigates can grab it before it hits the water.

It was an Englishman, Christopher Cadbury, who ensured a secure future for the wildlife of



Beaching the pirogue on remote, rat-free Aride:

It is now a Sevchelles Special Reserve, owned by the Royal Society for Nature Conservation, with additional support from the World

From May to the end of September, the south-east tradewinds close the island to visitors altogether; for the rest of the year, weather permitting, a few daytrippers arrive by motor launch from Praslin to transfer to the pirogue outside the reef and be brought ashore for an exhilarating but strenuous island tour followed



the Seychelles nature reserve has a population of eight adults—and a million seabirds of 10 different species which use it as their nest in the Indian Ocean

this unique island by purchasing it 15 years ago.

The island warden is 36-year-old Ian Bullock, a biologist who took up the post in Aride last year after nine years in the Forest of Dean. His only direct communication with the outside world is by radio transmitter to a receiving station on Mahé. Apart from conducting lively tours of the island in which he communicates

by a barbecue. Swimming with turtles in the

crystal waters inside the reef and watching

dolphins at play in the seas beyond are

common experiences but cannot be

challenging series of scientific projects to conduct and the difficult task of bending to his will the workshy workforce of seven Seychellois who manage the plantation and the pirogue.

botanist girlfriend. After being privileged to spend a couple of nights on the island myself, I can pass on news of the living conditions. They amount to tropical camping under a corrugated roof without the luxuries of electricity or running water. There is a wonderful to be quiet or comfortable

his love and knowledge of the birdlife, he has a verandah and a crude kitchen in an outhouse.

All drinking water is filtered, with showers by iug, and a hole in the ground for a lavatory. The heat and the humidity are high. The gurgling, burbling, wailing, bleats, squeaks and He was looking forward to the arrival of his whistles of the birds continue 24 hours a day, enlivened at night by mice, mosquitoes and the occasional blood-curdling scream from an Audubon's Shearwater guiding its partner back to the family burrow after a week of feeding at sea. No one ever said that paradise was meant

in the reef. Now, with one of the crew anxiously scanning the surf from the bow and the sun closing fast on the horizon, we slipped with the sea through this secret entranceway. Moments later the boat ground ashore and the crew used succeeding waves to help roll the battered blue vessel up the steep, sandy beach on coconut

huddled with her babies and sitting stoically in

slopping water when, 20 minutes later, we

began the final approach through a narrow gap



The ultimate carnivores: David Back, a winner in the 1987 Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, captures a gory end for a buffalo which chanced

LIFE AND DEATH IN THE BUSH

Brian Jackman explains the thrill of safari in Africa's lion country

in a succession of earth-shaking grunts. It is the most thrilling sound of the African night: a lion

Lying in the flimsy safety of one's tent it is easy to imagine him, 9 feet long from nose to tail tuft, padding through the starlight on his huge soft paws. A lion roaring is keeping in touch with the rest of the pride. "I am here; where are you?" A male lion roaring is also exercising his territorial imperative, warning

Again his voice crashes out through the darkness, to be answered farther off by another, out to a horizon of blue faraway hills,

IT BEGINS with a cavernous groan, dies away and yet another. The big cats are hungry and you can sense the tension crackling across the plains. Somewhere out there the zebra herds will be standing, heads up, nostrils flaring, ears cocked for the sound of stealthy bodies in the grass. The stallions squeal in alarm, and already the hyenas are whooping as if in anticipation of the kills they know will come by morning.

For 15 years I have been drawn back to Africa by the song of the lion and its magic never palls. From the moment I saw my first moving through an ocean of grass that reached

Of course it was not only the lions. It was the smell of dust and grass and game; the pure, clear air of the high Masai plains, the cold dawns and hot drowsy days filled with the fluting calls of bush shrikes, the cries of plovers, larks and francolins. It was the heady feeling of unfettered space and freedom. It was the sheer abundance of life, from the elephants standing with ears flapping in the shadows of the forests to the tiny metallic sunbirds hovering among the leonotis flowers.

But it was also the presence of the predators: hyena and wild dog; the lean and hungry



upon a pride of hungry lions in the African bush

leopard, loveliest of cats, sprawled in the boughs of a strangler fig; and most of all the lion, the largest, the most powerful, its strength increased by its habit of consorting in prides.

In lion country there is always a tingling sense of expectancy. Their presence adds drama to the landscape. Even when they are in repose, lolling with pink tongues and heaving flanks in the sparse shade of a thorn thicket, you know you are gazing at the ultimate carnivore.

I saw my first lions in the Masai Mara game reserve in south-west Kenya, Today the Mara is a busier place, its grasslands rutted by a stream of tourist vehicles; but its lush Out of Africa landscapes are still the finest big-game stronghold in Kenya, 600 square miles of plains and ridges and riverine forest rolling down to form a common frontier with Tanzania's vast Serengeti national park.

It is the last place in Kenya where you can still see great wandering herds of plains game;

zebra, topi, giraffe, gazelle, and every year of thousands. Down there black rhino still between July and September their numbers are swelled by a million wildebeest, an invading army trooping in from the Serengeti to feed on the Mara's greener pastures

The arrival of the migrating wildebeest heralds a season of plenty for the Mara lions. Every day, before mid-morning, a vortex of descending vultures denotes another kill in the long grass. Everywhere, from Paradise Plain to the dense reed beds of Musiara Marsh, the prides wait to ambush the hapless wildeheest.

With at least 500 lions in the reserveprobably the highest density anywhere in Africa-the Mara is ideal country for watching the big cats. They are so used to being photographed that it is often possible to drive within a few yards of them; and it is far easier to locate lions on the open plains than in the tangled thornbush country of other parks and reserves such as Tsavo or Samburu.

The local guides and drivers also know the ways of the prides and where they are most likely to be found. Stay two or three days at the Mara Serena lodge, or one of the Mara's famous tented camps-Kichwa Tembo. Governors, Ol Kiombo-and it is quite possible to see 100 lions.

The same is true farther south in the Serengeti. There, 1,000 lions roam across a national park the size of Holland. The biggest prides are to be found in the beautiful acacia parklands of the Seronera Valley, within easy driving distance of Seronera lodge; but the most spectacular lion country lies to the south on the open plains beyond Simba Kopies.

Between June and October the treeless plains of the southern Serengeti are virtually deserted. The great herds have gone north, leaving only the Grant's gazelles, which can go for months without drinking, marooned in a heat-hazy emptiness of stubble and dust-devils. But in November huge thunderheads begin to pile up in the late afternoon skies. This is Ilkiserat, as the Masai call the time of the short rains, when storm showers lure the wildebeest back to their ancestral calving grounds.

By the time the long rains have broken in the new year the short grass plains are as green as Ireland, flecked with white storm lilies and covered with wildebeest as far as the eye can see. Most of the gangly brown calves are born in February, and the predators grow fat. Now is the time to see the magnificent black-maned lions for which Serengeti is renowned as the Gol pride, the Naabi Hill pride and the lions of Ndutu and the Moru Kopjes hunt and sleep on the open plains

I know of only one other place on earth to match the drama of the Serengeti. To the south-east of the park, beyond the fossil beds of Olduvai Gorge, the land rises to meet the cloud forests of the Ngorongoro highlands. The road rises with it, climbing laboriously until suddenly you are at the rim of a mighty crater, an immense natural amphitheatre nearly 2,000 feet

Ngorongoro is one of the wonders of Africa. To gaze down into that great well of silence is to hear the last echo of the Pleistocene. The crater is a lost world which has hardly changed in two million years. The wind sighs across its sunlit depths. A bateleur eagle sails past on outstretched wings. Far below, where cloud shadows crawl across the crater floor, you can pick out the gleam of soda lakes, the rose-pink blush of flamingoes gathered in their hundreds

roam the golden grasslands, with elephant and buffalo, wildebeest and lion.

The Ngorongoro Wildlife Lodge is a pleasant place to stay. Sunbirds flit around its balcony on the crater rim, and there are log fires at night to ward off the highland chill. But the greatest thrill is to camp on the crater floor. among the animals, either in the airy glades of the Lerai forest, or at Ngaitokitok-the Springs of God-where hippo chuckle in the reeds and sandgrouse come flighting in at

South again, deeper into Tanzania, is Tarangire, a less-visited national park stretching down into the Masai Steppe. Tarangire lies beyond the south-eastern shores of Lake Manyara, another classic Tanzanian park whose lions have acquired the photogenic habit of sleeping high in the branches of acacia

In Tarangire, however, the lions are shyer. the landscapes wilder and the sense of an older untamed Africa much stronger. There is a lodge at Lemiyon in the park's northern triangle; but again, this is a place where it is more enjoyable to camp, rising with the dawn to look for Tarangire's elusive prides or seek out the herds of orvx and eland which haunt these baobab-dotted parklands in the dry-season months from July to October.

Once you have camped in the bush you will be sad to return to the more secure world of the lodges, for all their undoubted luxuries. The same applies to walking safaris. Having encountered Africa in the old style, at ground level, following spoor, tuning in to the sounds and smells of the bush and experiencing the rush of adrenalin that comes with being close to big game on foot, you will never want to see Africa from a vehicle again.

By far the best place for a baptism in bushbashing is Zambia's South Luangwa national park, where walking safaris were pioneered by Norman Carr, the former head warden. Today the Luangwa Valley is still unequalled for bush-walking, either morning hikes or five-day. camp-to-camp treks. Here, in a wilderness the size of Devon, thousands of elephant, buffalo, kudu, zebra and impala wander among greengold aisles of monane woodland, giant fig trees and winterthorns, steeple-like anthills and oxbow lagoons shaded by dark groves of ebony trees. From lodges along the Luangwa River-Chinzombo, Chibembe, exclusive Nsefu-you can explore it all with an experienced trail leader and a game guard who carries an elephant gun, just in case.

Here, too, lions and leopards are common. They are harder to see in the Luangwa's fathomless woodlands, lying up during the day in the dappled thickets. But their pug marks are everywhere on the dusty trails, and nights in the Valley echo to their voices: the gruff, woodsawing rasp of the leopard, the thunderous cadenzas of the lions.

How good it is to lie under a mosquito net and listen to the sound of Africa. In an age when wildness everywhere is in retreat, it is comforting to discover that such places remain, where the antelope run and the song of the lion still rumbles across the plains, and to know that for a little while at least we can still share their world ()

Brian Jackman is a journalist on The Sunday Times



The Grand Tetons which overlook Jackson Hole in Wyoming are one reason why the resort stole Arnie Wilson's heart. To pilgrims on skis.

IN LOVE FOR THE FIRST TIME

Arnie Wilson, veteran of more than 160 ski resorts, picks his favourite four. From the Wild West scenery of Jackson Hole to a leap into space over Val-d'Isère

JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING

FALLING head over heels is an appropriate way of becoming infatuated with a skiing resort. I am pining for Jackson Hole, Wyoming. And this is something of a love letter.

Not having fallen in love with a ski resort before, I found the experience almost painful. So much so that after my first fling last March, I couldn't wait to see her again-and flew back for a passionate reunion in the summer.

Jackson Hole refers to a hole or gap in the mountains through which the early trappers travelled to trade with the Indians. Beyond is the town of Jackson, a real Wild West town with wooden pavements. Some of the town is original. The rest has been rebuilt in traditional

I feared that seeing Jackson Hole without snow might be risky-rather like seeing an exotic lady the morning after without her make up. I needn't have worried. She-I cannot bring myself to call the resort "he", in spite of it being named after a tough and sweaty old trapper-was lovelier than ever.

A young moose was chewing the fresh green grass in a gulley I had skied three months earlier, now transformed from a frozen leap into a warm and verdant mountain glade.

At the foot of Rendezvous Mountain is Teton Village, named after the beautiful Grand Teton Mountains, which dominate this wide

and, as Californians would say, "awesome" valley. The three main peaks-South, Middle and Grand Teton, which are close to the skiing area but not part of it-are collectively known as the Cathedral and are as stunning and mystical as any place of worship.

The village is unexpectedly small and comis a chapel with a spire. Paul McCollister, now in his 70s, started the resort 23 years ago. When it opened, it was marketed very much as a macho, rugged resort where cowboys skied with spurs on their ski boots and a couple of six-guns hanging from their holsters.

The skiing is based around two mountains. Après-Vous is a polite and gentle mountain which, like a friendly and long-suffering elephant, will allow all kinds of liberties, "Tell them about Après-Vous," pleaded McCollister. "We want beginners to come here and not be afraid. They can learn on Après-Vous and then start to enjoy Rendezvous.

Rendezvous is a firecracker, a powder-keg of a mountain, which will play good-natured but hair-raising tricks if you let it-such as sending you down a chute named Paint Brush at alarming speed on your bottom, while your skis Snowbird, Utah, and Robert Redford, who clatter down behind you.

At the top is a stomach-churning chute called Corbett's Couloir which involves leaping off an overhang, landing 12 feet below and then skiing it like any other couloir. But if you do not time ford did not present himself for inspection.

your mini ski-jump to perfection you will tumble rather than ski the rest of the way.

In front of you is an uninterrupted 4,000 foot vertical drop, with exciting trails through rocks, between cliffs, down steep, tree-lined chutes and, lower down for those less experienced skiers, the widest tree-lined ski "motorway" I pact. Visually, if not spiritually, the focal point have ever seen. You can ski it straight or, if you are a beginner, perform endless traverses and snow-ploughs.

When you take a breather you gaze across the vast plain that separates the Tetons and the Gros Ventre mountains on the horizon. One. like the head of an Indian chief, gazing skywards in profile, is called the Sleeping Indian. This plain helps to give Jackson Hole its stunning scenery, enhancing the natural mountain beauty by adding perspective.

For every skier who used to watch Hopalong Cassidy or Zorro at Saturday morning pictures, this is sheer fantasy come true: the Wild West and the world's finest skiing all rolled into one. As I said, I'm in love.

SNOWBIRD, UTAH

often skis there, have much in common. Both are extremely good looking and give the impression of being too good to be true. If Snowbird has a flaw, I did not find it. Mr Red-



the three main peaks are visually stunning and "as mystical as any place of worship"

It comes close to being my skiing Shangri-la. But the mustang gutsiness of Jackson appeals to my contrariness marginally more than the sleek, thoroughbred qualities of Snowbird.

There is snow galore here—an average of 550 inches a year-more than Vail, Squaw trumpet its proximity to the nearest airport-Salt Lake City is just 31 miles away.

Skiing on and off the trails is quite simply superb. There are long, sweeping runs with wonderful snow and some of the best bowlskiing in the world. Above the spruce trees, where the snow-grooming machines never venture, are the gigantic snow cauldrons which make for exhilarating skiing. From the top of the tram (cable car) you traverse to the very rim of these colossal bowls-preferably with a guide or ski-host-and then launch with a whoop of joy or a scream of fear, or a combination of both, into a plunge of desperate

With luck you might stay upright long enough to make a few turns before the inevitable first fall, which won't hurt. The snow is soft "crud". Unlike Europe where crud is a derogatory term for treacly, ankle-wrenching stuff, American crud is simply ungroomed deep snow. It is quite skiable although it helps if, like me, you have the physique of a piste-flattening

Snowbird is one of the starting points for something rather adventurous called Interconnect. Equipped with avalanche bleepers and accompanied by two guides, you ski off the trail to four other resorts. Our small party was first put through its paces with a breathtaking non-stop, top-to-bottom cruise at Snowbird. Then we were off in the silent back-of-beyond snows heading for Solitude. Still no sign of Redford, but I was at least hoping to catch sight of Charlton Heston trekking slowly through the mountains on horseback.

ST MORITZ, SWITZERLAND

One of the most delicious moments of any skiing holiday is the transition from fierce, heady exercise in crisp, invigorating air to the soporific fireside gathering with schnapps fumes and Valley and Jackson. Snowbird also likes to wood smoke in the air after a relaxing bath and a languid, luxurious dinner.

Rarely is this more keenly felt than in St Moritz in the magnificent Engadine Valley. Having taken on the famous long black run at Lagalb in Pontresina like a walrus on waterskis, and gradually exhausted yourself doing it three or four times, you can gouge a mogul-like hole in your life savings by taking dinner at the

Here the aromas of perfumes, brandies and cigars waft across the table in one of the world's most opulent hotels. The background noise is cosmopolitan. The men wear dinner jackets: the ladies are chic and in expensive designer

As a slightly cheaper alternative you could dine at the older and more conservative Kulm. home of the world famous Cresta Run (virtually in the hotel's back garden).

There are six ski areas totalling 200 miles of runs. A car is needed to get to all six.

The Corviglia-Piz Noir area is reached by funicular from the centre of town, or by cable car from St Moritz Bad or Celerina. This section of the mountains alone has five cable cars and funiculars, 19 drag lifts, 40 miles of runs-and seven mountain restaurants.

A cable car ascends to Piz Noir at 10,000 feet from where good skiers enjoy a 5 mile descent to Celerina. A cable car in the Corvatsh area rises to more than 11,000 feet from where wonderful wide-open runs eventually bring you down through the pine forests. My favourite area is the immensely beautiful Diavolezza Glacier near Pontresina.

The glacier is surrounded by a ring of

mountains. This is the home of the Lagalb black run. When heavily used, the most ferocious moguls appear and it becomes very difficult. I was fortunate to find it cushioned with a deep layer of fresh snow But whatever the conditions, the knees start to say "give us a break" after three or four descents.

This is probably the moment to have lunch at 9,000 feet in the mountain restaurant before an awe-inspiring descent on the elacier with crevasses to each side. In the final stages you can almost smell, like a Bisto kid, the aroma of lobster bisque and aperitifs wafting up the mountain from the Palace

That magic moment is on its way.

VAL-d'ISÈRE, FRANCE

There are many ski resorts in France starting with Val. Only one is so famous that you need say no more than "Val", for people to know it must be Val-d'Isère. Val is the ski purist's dream. There is no end to it, whether skiing on piste or off. Many resorts claim to be a "ski paradise". Few are. Val is.

Last time I skied there it came close to perection: not a cloud in the sky, dawn to dusk. Sunday to Saturday, with snow too good to be true. The fresh-faced instructor. Daniel looked like a boy straight out of lycée, complete with dark glasses and obligatory Gauloise, but with the motivating powers of Churchill, Brian Clough and Eva Peron rolled into one

The first day was my birthday. So were the next five. Life was not only beginning at 40. It was sky-rocketing.

Apart from the maze of lifts (more than 100. with neighbouring Tignes) and 160 miles of runs, what is unforgettable about Val is the couloirs. My first glimpse of one was when Daniel took us deep into off-piste country on our second day. We came across a vawning chasm and reacted with a mixture of hilarity and disbelief. All you could see was blue sky-and down at your feet, something looking remarkably like a precipice. For one ridiculous moment we thought Daniel was going to take us down there. He was.

"Do not be afraid," he said softly, and launched himself into space. Half-way down, with disturbing ease, he paused, "Come on. Arnie," he said. And then repeated: "Do not be afraid. Do not sit down."

Once committed to this act of extreme folly, it proved not quite as difficult as it appeared rom the top. The sensation of reaching the bottom was an addictive mixture of heady relief and exhilaration. We wanted to do it again. We had developed a taste for these couloirs-or was it a death wish? Daniel found a new one for

Val-d'Isère also has one of the most spectacular mogul fields in the Haute-Savoie-the so-called Solaise bumps. You can even go bump in the night by taking part in a torchlight procession. Off-piste are fabulous runs such as the Col Pers. Le Grand Vallon and the Tour de

The night life is better than in most French resorts, with plenty of nightclubs and bars. Somehow most Brits seem to end up at Dick's Tea Bar. Wherever you dance, your head will doubtless spin with action-replays of one of the 115 runs, one of the endless off-piste snowfields, or perhaps the triumph of your first space-walk" on skis-down one of those exciting couloirs O



Only the names change on the Côte d'Azur: François Mitterrand is the present occupant of the presidential summer house, Fort Bregançon, above

SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

Godfrey Smith gets to the heart of the French Riviera with an early morning croissant, out of season, in Saint Trop

A CELEBRATED actress once entered the living room of the Villa Mauresque. This was the house at Cap Ferrat in the south of France that Somerset Maugham bought in 1926 and lived in, war apart, for the rest of his life. Waiting to greet her were Noël Coward, Beverley Nichols and Godfrey Winn. "Why," cried the artless creature, speaking truer than she knew, "this is fairyland!"

Yet perhaps she should be forgiven the hyperbole. The Riviera in the late 20s was a haven for English writers. Michael Arlen was at Cannes, Frank Harris at Nice, E. Phillips Oppenheim in Cagnes. The south beckoned the island race with its intimations of wine and roses, sun and sex. "There are only three things which make life worth living," wrote the Anglo-Irish hedonist, Cyril Connolly, "to be writing a tolerably good book, to be in a dinner party for six, and to be travelling south with someone your conscience permits you to love."

The right way to go was in the fabled Blue Train. "There is excitement," notes Paul Fussell in Abroad, his study of Anglo-Saxon literary travel between the wars, "in just writing the words." The Blue Train stood for escape: "Sleep your way from the City's fogs to the Riviera's sunshine." It stood for delicious food: an eel tank was part of the dining car. Then, since the voyage south was made at night, it stood for lust. You awoke in the morning to the mimosa and orange trees, the red rocks of the Esterel on one side, the blue waters of the Mediterranean on the other. Ah, but that world vanished with the war, lament the romantics. It was, in Connolly's haunting phrase, closing time in the gardens of the west. The playboys and nymphets had gone; now was the time for the overnight coaches and package tours, the yobs and the yuppies.

The line of thought the sentimentalist

deploys is a simple one. First, those were the days—when Willie Maugham was serving his ice-cold martinis at the Villa Mauresque, Max Beaverbrook offered daquiris at La Capponcina on the Cap d'Ail and Greta Garbo dined with Aristotle Onassis and Winston Churchill at Nice. Second, I was, of course, one of that select coterie; and, third, now people like you have come along and ruined it.

There is something in the charge. Yes, the Côte d'Azur is an inferno if you are daft enough to go there in August. Yes, many hillsides along that magical coastline, once rich with pines, are now scarred with hideous new housing. Yes, the dire sound of the Brits abroad, scattering their ghastly fractured French, is hard to escape. Yet to write the Riviera off just like that is rash and premature. What you need now is know-how and cunning, a feel for the rhythm of life there and the lie of the land. When I sit on the terrace in a village up in the Var hills, I can see the distant lights of Saint Tropez; but all I can hear is the faint slap of the dough as the baker makes the bread in the ancient village bakery down the alley. Pick your time and place, and the Riviera can still work its spell.

The right time to be there is, without question, in April and May when the bougainvillea blossoms, the trippers are still 1,000 miles north and it is like an English midsummer day. After that, wait until late September or October, when the Parisians have made their lemming rush home and the sea is still warm, if coated with a rainbow slick of Ambre Solaire. Whichever end of summer, I like to go into Saint Trop, which I know best of all the Riviera resorts, after an early swim and in time for café au lait and croissants at Senequier's on the front. I like to be back in our village by 11 o'clock, when the jet set are just waking up and thinking about the hair of the dog that bit

them. From then on, for me the right place to be is up in the hills 5 miles inland. Don't use the beaches again until after 6pm when they are blissfully quiet.

If, however, naked ladies and gents turn you on, head for Liberty beach. If it's gays you prefer, make for the Voile Rouge next door. But do not wander off starkers to adjoining beaches; there are invisible boundaries and the police will come along and wrap you in one of their big blankets. If, though, you want to sample a beach for perfectly normal people, try Gigaro-still quiet, clean, uncrowded and served by two handy cafés. Even quieter, but very remote, is La Bastide Blanche, reached only by a bumpy track full of potholes, or by boat from the sea. If, yet again, you seek famous faces, the Club Cinquante Cinq on Pampelonne beach has its own garden and glamorous clientele. And Moorea plage features local swimsuits in its own fashion shows. None of these beaches is overrun or Anglicized.

Brigitte Bardot, who first put Saint Trop on the international map, is said to be moving on, though you can still see her shopping in her jeep, accompanied by her 10 dogs. At the Café des Arts in the Place de Lices, you can still get an excellent menu with all the wine you want for 155 francs—and Michele Morgan or Johnny Halliday at the next table. Even the French president, François Mitterrand, comes to Saint Trop, staying at Fort Bregançon.

To the west, the Camargue is still quiet; to the east, Shirley Conran has just bought a château at Seillans outside Nice; Anthony Burgess is still in Monaco and Graham Greene at Antibes. Claude Chabrol, Alain Delon and Charlotte Rampling are familiar faces up and down the coast; and Joan Collins has just bought two make-believe fishermen's cottages in Port Grimaud. If this is the end of the road for the Riviera, what a way to go \bigcirc

AFTER MIDNIGHT

Tim McGirk takes a late night tour of the best clubs and bars in Madrid

MADRID is a city of insomniacs. If you are not an insomniac, the next best thing to be is a lazy tourist who sleeps late. This winter could be your chance to see Madrid by night. There will probably be no Prado Museum to rise for: the guards are striking sporadically and already the masterpieces are drifting strangely about the building.

One of the directors recently found a Vermeer in the men's lavatory. One presumes that the culprit could not find a newspaper to take with him into the loo and so grabbed the closest canvas for contemplation.

Madrid's insomniacs are also egalitarian. On any night at the Cock (as in Robin) Club, on Reina 16, it is possible to find Carmen, wife of the prime minister, Felipe Gonzalez, mingling in a crowd with a heavy-metal guitarist, the philosopher Fernando Sabater and, who knows, sometimes maybe even a striking museum guard.

Nobody, not even the prime minister's wife, shows up until after midnight in Madrid's bars. That is because dinner starts so late. If you want to enjoy Madrid's nocturnal rhythms, gorge on a late lunch at, say, Casa Paco, where the speciality is a steak served on a sizzling terracotta plate. The house red is an excellent Valdepeñas served in abundance. Next, do nothing more ambitious or strenuous than indulge in the siesta—the Iberian yoga—for several hours, and you are ready for a night on the town.

Dress warmly; the Guadarrama mountains to the north keep Madrid dry but fiercely cold. In the harsh daylight, Spanish ladies wear sunglasses with their black leather. Stroll down the Paseo del Prado beside the museum, a big wide boulevard with liquidambar trees, towards Neptune's fountain. The sea-god's trident may be sheathed in ice, as you, too, may be before long.

Warm yourself up with a wine or whisky at the Café Gijon on the Paseo de la Castellana, near the Columbus-sailing-off-the-world's-edge fountain. At the Café Gijon Spanish literati, as well as John Fowles, Mario Vargas Llosa and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, have been congregating for nearly a century. It is a genteel place of large mirrors, old waiters and ravishing young art students.

From the Café Gijon, walk up to the Bocaito on Calle Barquillo. The Bocaito is one of Madrid's best tapas bars, serving a choice of snacks ranging from miniature wild mushrooms grilled with garlic, baby eels on hot buttered toast, stuffed mussels and slices of smoked jamón serrano.

All right, so you read Hemingway. At this point it is safe to tell you that El Maestro used to drink at the Café Gijon, but if you try to challenge me on this by asking one of the waiters you will get a surly reply. They are tired of tourists trying to construct earnest questions on Hemingway from foreign phrase books. Before he was getting paid a dollar a word, Hemingway stayed at the Gran Hotel Vitoria, on the Plaza Santa Ana. It is no longer gran and

matadors down on their luck stay there. The matadors stay at the Vitoria because everyone in the bullfighting world—the impresarios, the breeders, the picadors and even the flunkies who drag the dead animal from the ring-all go to the bars on Calle Vitoria.

The ambience in these places is terrible faltering neon-lights, television and radio blaring at once-but they are cheap and honest. If you hear any real flamenco in Madrid it will be here—a sorrowful cante hondo from an Andalucian immigrant worker, runaway gipsy children or from a drunken banderillero who has lost his nerve in the ring. There is one bar in Vitoria frequented by Spain's dwarf bullfighters, and the place is so grotesque that you have to be either Goya or Diane Arbusor a true Madrileño—to appreciate it.

For less stunted companionship head back to the Café Central opposite the Vitoria for live jazz, or wander into some of the bars near the theatre. La Trucha also has excellent tapas wild asparagus and fried fish.

If it is before 2am, wander through the 17th-century Madrid de las Asturias until you reach a broad and tranquil square with the royal palace on one side and the opera house on the other. The Café Oriente serves good Irish coffee. The décor is sumptuous fin de siècle which belies the fact that it is owned by a priest. He is now almost as wealthy as his fellow clergyman who, several years ago, left the confessional to marry Spain's richest aristocrat, the Duchess of Alba.

Spiritually braced by the Café Oriente, you may want to try Madrid's odder discos. There is King Creole, on San Vicente Ferrer 7, which attracts the city's young rockers, or the aptly named Amnesia on Castellana 23 which stays open until 6am. It sounds exhausting, but just think of Madrid as being in a different time zone, many longitudes into a darkness where the city shines O

Eating tapas at bars is a Spanish custom. The menu can range from wild mushrooms to baby eels



LONDON NEWS.



An illustration published in 1886 which depicted how Tower Bridge would look when finished.



The hustle and bustle of London Bridge as it was in 1872.



London's Big Ben and the new Houses of Parliament as they appeared in 1857.



Ludgate Hill from 1863 showing how the

A Victorian scene from 1893, Sunday morning in Kensington Gardens.



A Victorian coaching scene in 1881—the start of the journey from the White Horse cellar, Piccadilly.

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Picking up the pieces

Scrooge advises Tiny Tim to hold his stock and build up cash

DEAR TINY TIM.

This time of year has always been testing for me and to write to you now about your portfolio after the financial catastrophe of the last few months is not a pleasant task. Generally, stock markets have fallen 20 per cent to 30 per cent, more in the UK and Europe, less in Japan and the USA, although, adjusting for the weaker dollar, the fall in the USA has been about as bad as London. Your portfolio has done likewise, with some particularly heavy falls in your holding of BNP (the major French Bank) and Fisons. I can only be thankful that you were wise enough to pass over your old portfolio of technology and property developers for my management before the crash occurred and I took the decision to sell it off (see my advice last September). When I look at how US West Coast technology companies have performed (down at least 50 per cent) and propertydevelopment companies in the UK (down 60 per cent and more), you should consider yourself in some degree lucky.

Nonetheless, your portfolio has gone down substantially in the worst crisis for 57 years and I know you will want to know why. In a nutshell, you, Tiny, and many like you in the USA, were and have been living beyond your

This spendthrift behaviour could be financed only by foreign lenders, mainly the Germans and Japanese who were raising trade surpluses of about \$60 billion and \$100 billion each. The two dangers inherent in the circumstances were either that the Japanese and Germans would cease to finance the excessive US spending, leading to a fall in the dollar, or that the US authorities would continue to raise US interest rates to protect the dollar and so choke off US growth.

The so-called Louvre Agreement of February, 1987 between the major seven Western nations appeared to stabilize the dollar and to support it by official foreign buying. At the same time the US equity market consoled itself with the expectation that the US Federal Reserve would not want to raise interest rates too far in the run-up to a US presidential elec-

tion. Thus, despite the dangers, the stock market showed continued resilience. Those two basic dangers were not new.

Why, you will ask, did the crash finally come? There are many theories, but two immediate straws to break the camel's back can be found. First, James Baker, Secretary of the US Treasury, came out with strongly critical remarks about German interestrates policy, suggesting the Louvre Agreement was breaking down. Second, the US trade figures in mid-October showed no signs of improving, indicating that the fall in the dollar which had already occurred was not leading to a reduction in the deficit. On October 19, the US market fell by 22 per cent, the largest one-day fall ever.

In a sense the fall was triggered by an exchange-rate crisis. Put another way, the markets came to the horrible recognition that a US recession was the only way out of the two US deficits and that the Louvre Agreement could delay it no longer.

You may well ask why a US problem gave rise to such a world-wide market collapse. The explanation is that a US recession tends to close US markets for foreign exporters and induce recession elsewhere. This would not be so if foreign governments took on expansionary policies to compensate, but only in Japan is this thought to be a real possibility. Thus markets like the UK that are highly geared to exports to the USA and US earnings have fallen even more severely than the United States. So there you are. I have given you an explanation for what I failed to predict.

Let us come down from these global thoughts to our everyday realities. What should you do next? After a crash of this magnitude, rapid and jejune judgments are both easy and potentially very costly.

Your holding of cash is now 10 per cent, partly a result of dividends but also the result of a substantial cash distribution by Newmont Mining to ward off the takeover attempt by T. Boone Pickens in the USA. I am also taking the cash alternative from the reorganization of TR Pacific Basin Investment Trust. This will be worth about £9,000, increase the value of the portfolio by about £1,800 and put your cash holdings up to about 20 per cent. Should you sit on this cash holding, or perhaps buy into the equity markets at these new lower levels, or even take a holding in fixed-interest bonds?

To remind you, as a relatively young man your portfolio should be invested for the long term in real value, and equity investments across the world offer the best assurance of this. Equity markets are more volatile (though recent events are exceptional), but you must be prepared to resist the temptation to sell when the news is bad and prices are low. It is just the time to think of buying. Your portfolio has been constituted on the principle that equities provide sound long-term value. The question is whether recent events have changed the underlying situation dramatically and you should retreat from your fundamental equity exposure. The two reasons for doing so would be either the expectation of inflation or the expectation of slump. On the former view, the best course would be to increase the cash in your portfolio further, because higher inflation would for the next year or so damage both equity and bond markets and give an opportunity to deploy cash in equities more cheaply at a later date. If the fear was for slump, which followed the crash in 1929, then fixed-interest bonds would do well and equities would suffer severely.

On balance, I find neither of these two dangers too terrifying at present. I am pleased to have a greater degree of cash in the portfolio to recognize the uncertainty in the current environment, but I am not convinced that the US will suffer more than a mild recession and such a recession is already discounted by share prices.

Fears of inflation, on the other hand, are premature, since although interest rates have been lowered in the USA after the crash, the crash has destroyed much personal wealth and should of its own accord reduce consumption demand and so inflation pressures. My best guess is that the US markets will continue to be reasonably steady for a time and may even rally further, and this process should help other markets. The dollar trade account may eventually show some improvement, which would also help at least the USA. However, substantial improvements in prices would be a reason to sell stock rather than buy.

Do not be downcast by the recent events. Your portfolio is a sound, value-driven investment and has reasonable prospects to withstand even the severest falls. I shall aim to build up cash on market strength over the next

few months, and deploy cash in the event of severe weakness.

Your ever warm-hearted, cool headed Uncle Scrooge

INTEREST/ MEDMA MARKET VALUE BOOK AIETD AMOUNT/DESCRIPTION PRICE UK Ordinary Shares
1490 BAT Industries £0.25 434.00 X 5,920 6,740 233.00 X 95.00 2.03 2.52 2540 Fisons £0.25 170 7090 Foreign & Colonial £0.25 4310 General Electric £0.05 3960 TR Pacific Basin £0.25 10,000 7,250 7,130 9,980 180.00 50 0.72 Foreign Ordinary Shares 9,970 US\$46.00 3.38 3.73 180 Banque Nationale Paris Cir DM270.00 US\$52.63 X US\$33.13 7,230 8,050 9,170 270 Dun & Bradstreet 10,110 10,170 1.84 66,330 1,880 2.83 Sub-total (£) Net dividend received 100,000 Book cost: as of July 16. X = Ex dividend

*Scrooge shares a type-writer with Kevin Paken-ham of Foreign & Colonial Management, I Laurence Pountney Hill, London EC4. Readers should be warned that Scrooge's portfolio can go down as well as up in value \(\)

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Langan's bossy brasserie

Kingsley Amis likes the food but hates the pre-meal service

MICHAEL CAINE is pursuing me, not in the body but in pictured shape. A photograph of the well-known actor gazed at me from the wall of the Caprice the other week, and I found what I took to be a drawing of him, looking rather pale, at the top of the menu at Langan's Brasserie, in which I have heard he has an interest. Here, even more than at the Caprice,

showbiz is the order of the day, with many customers wearing the uniform of the profession: jacket, white shirt, no tie.

The part where you have drinks resembles the tea-room of a station hotel given over to part of an amateur art exhibition. Terrible paintings hang there, not all in a modernist style, though one such—or rather two, one roughly tacked across part of the otherdisfigured the downstairs diningroom where I lunched. Along the far end of this room there are shelves randomly stacked with very second-hand books like Chapman's plays and the poems of William Edmonstoune Aytoun, the latter of which I should really have tried to buy or perhaps, more appropriately, stolen.

The upstairs dining-room, where I dined, is called Venetian something and a half-hearted attempt is made to evoke that city with some of the décor. Elsewhere a sort of student-cum-artist Parisian feel is aimed at, the most authentically Parisian touch being the bossiness and rudeness of the pre-meals service, though this is heftily backed up with an ineptitude and inefficiency all too characteristic of our own capital. On both my visits the performance was effortlessly the worst I have come across since starting to write this column.

Arrival at 12.30pm with a table booked for 1 o'clock should, most

people would feel, guarantee ample time for drinks before lunch. Not at Langan's Brasserie. At 12.45, jolly early, I thought, in fact before my guest and I had finished our first round, we were asked not at all tentatively to go to our table. I said we would like another drink first. "Oh, they want another drink first!" somebody cried, and when the general amazement had died down we were duly brought more drinks but, perhaps because the waiter knew very little English, they turned out to be the same as the first round, which we had not asked for and did not want. We were no more than half way into the replacements when we were again asked, even less tentatively, to go to the table, and tamely let ourselves be driven from the notnearly-full drinks room to the almost-empty dining-room at 12.55. Only when we had sat down did it sink in that, although we had been allowed to see menus, we had not been asked for our orders, in which case... I determined to improve on this.

When we turned up for dinner a couple of days later we made a better start, in that the

Pat Payands

fellow who had played the piano too loudly and in too concert-platform a style at lunch-time was now giving it a miss. This was made up for by the serving of a Dry Martini on the rocks instead of, as asked for, straight up—an internationally understood term for *not* on the rocks, plain. When a pert little creature tried for the second time in 10 minutes to hustle us to our table and stood over us, I said we would like to order first.

"We don't take orders in the bar," she said unapologetically.

Instead of asking her then what the hell, etc, I said in what I still think was a fairly neutral tone for the situation, "We'd like to finish our drinks first."

"I asked nicely," she said untruthfully.

By this time we were quite ready to move, not least because arrival at the table at lunch-time had brought us into a different world, of smiles and eager service and efficiency. It was the same when we reached the (again almostempty) upstairs dining-room, though here the waiters became overworked, while remaining

polite, as the place filled up. If we had thought we were in for more of the same as in the bar I think we would have walked out.

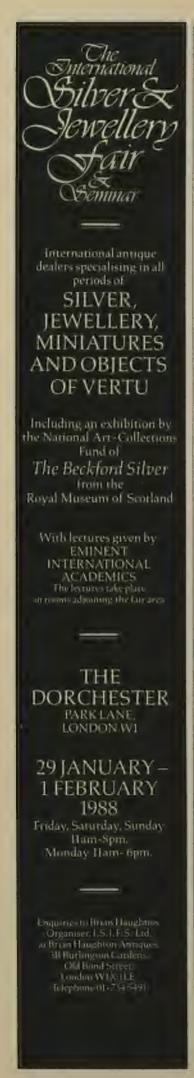
Had we done so we would have missed a treat, or rather two treats. We started off none too favourably with boring bread rolls, usually the sign of more boredom to come, and well-boiled instead of lightly-boiled quail's eggs. Everywhere else we saw the other side of the Parisian coin with food as delicious as I expect to be given anywhere, though not selected or deployed after any Parisian fashion one would normally think of. The starters were excellent, including gigantic succulent Mediterranean prawns and an artichoke heart stuffed with mushroom mousse that would have drawn a smile from a newly disqualified driver. All was well with the finishers too.

But it was the middle courses that, not at all as usual, brought the real resplendence. From an uncommonly varied and eclectic menu I chose for lunch black pudding with apple and onions and was transported; surely it was never as good as this on the banks of the Irwell, nor came with such generous trimmings. In the evening I opted with some trepidation for bratwurst and mash, mindful of what a highbrow sausage can be like, but this was thoroughly cooked despite being much less browned than I usually care for,

and had been beautifully made. My guest enjoyed a roast partridge that was both tender and retentive of every scrap of flavour and a roast duck fully worthy of that dish at its very

Writing and remembering have made me want to go again. But I won't. Like all human institutions, restaurants tend to do what they can get away with, and having got away with murder in the bar they may try a spot of massacre in the dining-room. Not worth the risk, even for a glimpse of Michael Caine in the flesh

Langan's Brasserie, Stratton House, Stratton Street, WI (491 8822). Mon-Fri 12.30-2.30pm, 7-11.30pm; Sat 8pm-12.30am. About £35 for two, excl wine



A taste of history

Michael Broadbent samples 178 wines in three days

ONE of the most extraordinary characters in the wine world is an unassuming German of undefinable age who inhabits a castle near Munich and collects old and rare wine which he unleashes at a monumental annual tasting. His name is Hardy Rodenstock.

Rodenstock is the man who brought to light a remarkable cache of late-18th-century bottles, each engraved with the name of the vintage and château and, most unusual, the owner's initials. The discovery was made in 1985. A bottle of 1787 Yquem was taken to the château, opened and found still perfect to drink. Even more interestingly, the owner of Yquem, the Comte Alexandre de Lur-Saluces, found the original order and invoice in his archives-and revealed that the initials on the bottle, Th.J., were those of Thomas Jefferson, at that time American envoy in France.

That autumn another bottle. this time of the 1784 vintage, was opened in Wiesbaden—this was my first tasting experience of these wines-and in December Rodenstock tested the market with a 1787 Chateau Lafitte [sic]. With its history, likely drinkability, authentication of the age of the bottle and the wheel-engraving, it is hardly surprising that Christie's managed to achieve a world record price for a bottle of wine-£105,000. The following spring, Rodenstock opened a bottle of the 1787 Branne-Mouton (now Mouton-Rothschild) at the château. It was perfection. That autumn Christie's sold in London a bottle of Jefferson's 1784 Yquem for £36,000, a world record for any white wine. Then, at Christie's VINEXPO sale in Bordeaux, a half of his 1784 Margaux realized 180,000 Ffr.

Over the past few years Rodenstock's tasting has been a one-day, 12-hour event. Two years ago he abandoned a German location and held the tasting at Château d'Yquem. Last year it was an extraordinary three-day event in Austria: at the Arlberg Hospiz, a de luxe yet homely family-run hotel 4,000 feet up, just above St Anton in the Tyrol.

Guests assembled on the Saturday. Fifty tasters, mainly German and Austrian, some accompanied by wives, one



Jefferson's 1784 Chateau Margaux

Dutchman, three distinguished Bordelais, including the peripatetic Comte de Lur-Saluces, four Americans—all collectors with great cellars—and two Englishmen including myself. The programme, mapped out on a poster-sized scroll, consisted of an opening dinner, a major "horizontal" tasting of 1962 red bordeaux (all the major châteaux), a gala dinner, a tasting of the greatest, a tasting of the oldest, and a closing black-tie dinner.

On the Sunday we had a tasting of some 70-odd 1962 clarets. Dinner was preceded by a methuselah of 1962 Lanson, a miscellany of 1962 dry whites to whet the palate and a galaxy of 1962 first growths in large bottles: a double-magnum of Lafite-perfection; an impériale of Ausoneunbelievably good (no one guessed what it was); a mouth-filling jeroboam of Latour; a double magnum of exotic Mouton; magnums of a silky-textured Haut-Brion. One of the magnums of Cheval-Blanc was woody, the other lovely, but the biggest disaster was an oxidized jeroboam of Château Margaux.

To put the *premier-cru* claret into perspective, at dinner our host presented the 1962 Romanée-Conti and Richebourg, DRC, in jeroboams. They were rather

closed up though the former was impressively concentrated. With the dessert came a 62 Tokay Edes Szamorodni, tasting like singed raisins, two Austrian eisweins and the impeccable 62 Yquem.

Monday morning was devoted to the very old and the very great, not necessarily the same thing. Some unidentifiable mid-19th-century clarets, a sweet, full and rich 1870 red, probably Lafite, an unexpectedly faultless Penfold's Australian burgundy bottled in England around 1890, and then a string of pricier items. The vintage of 1858, which opened the two golden pre-phylloxera decades, found the Lafite still lively, but the Mouton-Rothschild smelt of creosote and was awful.

The third "flight" or session that day reached some dizzy heights and terrible disappointments: the 1849 Ausone, very rare, dry singed, complete; the 1867 Ducru, recorked and topped up, was fragrant but drying out; the 1864 Château Margaux acetic but the Lafite perfection; the 1865 Margaux vinegar, the Lafite (recorked at the château in 1987) powerful and still tannic.

After the two disappointing Margaux, we all held our breath for the 1787, the highlight of the entire event. This was one of the renowned Jefferson bottles, and I had the somewhat nerve-wracking honour of drawing the cork which was the original one and charcoal black. The wine was decanted, leaving a dense, sandy sediment, and was poured into eight large, specially engraved glasses. It was quite extraordinary: still deep in colour; at the first sniff, unrevealing (with very old wines, no nose is good news), but after only five minutes in the glass the bouquet started to emerge, sweet, rich, like wholemeal biscuits. On the palate it was distinctly sweet, very lively. After 50 minutes, the remaining traces filled the glass with perfume.

The last day, we tasted fortified wines—the longest-lasting—from nine old bottles, ranging from onion-shaped, c 1700, to early 19th-century mould-blown; most more curious than pleasurable.

We tasted a total of 178 wines in three days. It is impossible to do justice either to their quality or to the generosity of our host \bigcirc

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REVIEWS

Dame Edna Everage aims for the jugular; Albert Finney is at his finest as an atheist stricken by faith in *J. J. Farr*



The nonentities in the stalls tremble as Australia's Dame Edna wields her gladdies. Who will be her next victim? You're never safe while she's on stage

THEATRE

On edge with Everage

IF STARS were ever categorized like boxers, then Dame Edna Everage (alias the Australian humorist Barry Humphries) would undoubtedly be a heavy-weight; and as befits such a status it is—in her stage appearances, at least—the whole audience that she blithely takes on.

Seeing her in her current show at the Strand Theatre, the ambiguously titled Back With a Vengeance!, one is reminded of just how crucial to her act is the ticklish atmosphere of a "live" experience. On television, sealed off behind the double glazing of the small screen, Dame Edna is, to be sure, an amusing and gaudily stylized ogress, except that the celebrities whose pretensions she deflates with such exuberant relish tend to be almost as gaudy and stylized as she is herself.

When she squares off with a Joan Collins or a Jeffrey Archer it becomes an evenly matched battle of heavyweights which the viewer watches in the security of his own living room as imperturbably as he would the Bruno-Bugner bout, confident that no stray uppercut will risk catching him on the chin. Throughout her stage show, by contrast, we remain uneasily alert to the fact that we just might find ourselves facing her in the ring.

Her first night in particular clinched this distinction. For, even if the public was a notably glittery one—from Lord Snowdon to Lord Lichfield, from Dennis Healey to Danny La Rue—everybody present knew that, contrary to television practice, it was not the glitterati but we, the unknowns, the utter nonentities (to borrow one of her own pet epithets), who would be on the receiving end of her odious overtures.

With Dame Edna immediately playing on our fears that we might end up among the sheepish victims whom she will eventually haul on to the stage, the tension sets in early. Her eyes, glinting behind monstrous bejewelled spectacles, rake the first half-dozen rows of the stalls like the searchlights of a prison camp from which there can be no escape. "Not yet but soon," she sadistically assures one potential invitee, Jean from Hackney; and complacently patting her gown, of a colour that could fairly be described as gossamer puke, she adds, "So soon you ought to start tensing up now." Of another, Mavis from Knightsbridge, who was no doubt endeavouring to slither out of range of her beady scrutiny, "Funny to see a woman creeping under her seat like that!'

Her insidiously bubbly and wonderfully droll monologue is meanwhile larded with insults and innuendo. But because the objects of her insults are either absent ("We had a real coincidence here the other evening: Charles and Diana came to see the same show") or else present but vulnerable (to Jean again: "You smell gorgeous, possum! I've always loved garlic prawns!"), they naturally fly in only one direction.

These calumnies are invariably accompanied by vicious tugs on

the heartstrings ("I mean that in a caring way, Mavis, a *nurturing* way," she smirks after one wince-making slander) or by the kind of euphemism that seems infinitely more offensive than the expression it is intended to sweeten.

Once her five selected guineapigs have been "volunteered" to take part in the hilariously tongue-tied "chat show with nobodies" that is one of the evening's highlights, the rest of us, those who have been spared, delude ourselves that we can now relax and enjoy this "massage parlour for the human spirit", as the egregious Dame herself refers to the experience, without any lurking anxieties to cloud our appreciation.

Careful, though. For we have already been hoaxed by a cod BBC news item (read by Kenneth Kendall, no less) announcing the sudden demise at the Everage Prostate Foundation and in rather suspicious circumstances ("They're still looking for his black box") of Dame Edna's long-suffering husband Norman, one of the clinic's "founder patients". (Under the impression that he was ordering a nice lunch of liver, kidneys, brain,

tongue, tripe and sweetbreads, poor Norm had donated so many of his organs to medical research that, when a mildly bereaved Edna arrived at his bedside, he was "barely a dent in the pillow".) The evening's performance, we are told, has been cancelled, the theatre's house-lights come up and, for a minute or two, we all sit there, wondering what, if anything, will happen next.

So there can be no relaxing in Dame Edna's company; and, at least for this jittery spectator, the most terrifying incident had yet to occur. During that ritualized moment of her act when, in her cosiest Queen Motherly manner, she throws bunches of gladioli out into the auditorium, paying special attention to the "paupers" in the upper balconies, one young woman, eager to grab a flower, tumbled out of her loge and nearly plummeted head first into the stalls. It was, of course, yet another gag. But what made it, for a heart-stopping couple of seconds, so authentic was that, with some truly Machiavellian deviousness, Dame Edna herself seemed to step

out of character. In that moment of apparently unscripted horror and panic, she became, for the first and last time, Barry Humphries.

As should be evident to anyone who has ever seen Dame Edna in action, this "lapse" was a master-stroke. For what ultimately makes her such a fascinating character is not that she is a transvestite but that not for a single instant (except the one mentioned above) does she cease to be a woman—or rather, to be perceived as such.

Perhaps that explains why (apart from the fact that he is the funniest performer in London and arguably in the world) we English appear so enraptured to have our well-being, as John Peter put it, "clawed and savaged into threads" by an Australian comedian: because the ruthless, commandeering style and "caring, nurturing" put-downs of Dame Edna Everage cannot help but remind us, with a deliciously masochistic frisson of recognition, of another heavyweight public figure, half nanny, half bogey-woman, and somewhat closer to home C

—GILBERT ADAIR

Crisis of a convert

RONALD HARWOOD offers a rare contribution to the West End stage—a full-scale debate—in his play J. J. Farr (Phoenix). Though it is set in the courtyard of a Buckinghamshire house occupied by former priests, we have all the while to imagine what has passed earlier in the Middle East where Farr (Albert Finney) had been one of several hostages held for five months. On a Sunday in his 18th week of captivity he saw from his prison cage the collapse of an English priest who was giving communion. Though his own faith had long vanished, he insisted on being allowed to administer to the dying priest the last sacrament in its crudest form-urine for wine. The moment was a revelation.

He describes this vividly to the five men at the Buckinghamshire home; he is a stricken man, remembering the prison yard unbearable in blazing heat, the guards high on hashish, the priest on the edge of death. Suffering still from his captors' branding on his back of what he believes to be a cross (but is it?) he is no longer the defiant scholar-atheist who had written such militant books as Seeing Not Believing and After God.

One of the former priests at the home—a retreat banned by the diocesan bishop—is a psychologist

named Lowrie, now an ardent atheist. Farr's books had taught him to disbelieve—"dismantling" God for him and giving him the courage he needed. But now he faces the teacher he had idolized falling from "rationalism" to belief. ("You were God to me," he exclaims, "Now I know you don't exist.")

Distraught, seeing no reason for living when his belief in disbelief is so sharply contested, Lowrie attempts to commit suicide. He will recover from these self-inflicted wounds, but what may happen we cannot say. All we know is that Farr feels himself obliged to leave the home which he has thrown into disarray.

A brave and affecting drama grows in power during the night, though I fear the playwright is grappling with too many listeners who do not care about faith or who are embarrassed by it. At least they can honour the acting (under Ronald Eyre's direction) of the six characters led superbly by Albert Finney: I have never known him in a part where he is so unlike his accepted image. This performance is magnificent.

Other notables are Bob Peck as the overwhelmed atheist, Trevor Peacock as a worker priest, and Bernard Lloyd as the warden of the home O

—J. C. TREWIN

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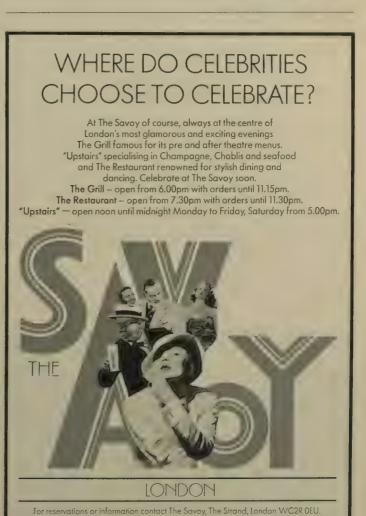
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Miller's felicitous Barber

ENGLISH National Opera's new production of The Barber of Seville is worth catching for Della Jones's superlatively sung Rosina, for the wit and cunning rhymes of Amanda and Anthony Holden's new translation and for the felicities of Jonathan Miller's controversial staging.

Della Jones's accomplishment as an interpreter of Rossini's mezzo-coloratura heroines has long been recognized, and here her technical mastery, sparkling musicianship and the inventiveness she brings to the embellishment of Rosina's vocal line are displayed to dazzling effect. Her singing captures the spirit of Rossini's comic masterpiece in a way that eludes Miller's academic exploration of the score.

In the opening scene he reminds us that Beaumarchais's comedy. on which the libretto was based, had its roots in the commedia dell'arte, the spirit of which hovers over Rossini's opera. The white clowns' suits, tall hats and black-beaked masks of the band of musicians who accompany Almaviva are straight out of Tiepolo's carnival scenes.

It is not immediately clear whether the producer intends to treat Figaro, Rosina, Almaviva and Bartolo as real people or have them revert to the traditional commedia characters of harlequin, lovers and doctor. It is certainly difficult to take Almaviva seriously when he appears in carnival costume, and Barry Banks makes little attempt at characterization. Even the experienced Alan Opie as Figaro is impeded from establishing the barber's usual immediate rapport with the audience in his entry aria "Largo al factotum".

However things improve considerably once the action moves away from the world of artifice and a measure of reality is introduced. Tanya McCallin's street facade divides to allow a raised box set to slide smoothly forward and the location changes to the inside of Dr Bartolo's house. The walls are lined with glass cupboards containing some of the gruesome paraphernalia of his profession-arms and legs and other anatomical models-and one of these cupboards is where Figaro hides to overhear the plotting of Bartolo and Basilio.

Henceforward the comedy finds its direction and is played to the full when Figaro and Rosina are on stage. Barry Banks introduces an element of hilarious farce into

Almaviva's disguises as the drunken soldier and the wimpish music teacher, and his singing is neatly ornamented and accurate. Rodney Macann produces some nimble singing as a lecherous, scheming Bartolo, far from senility, and John Connell, as an unusually spruce Basilio, sings in rounded tones but underplays the comic potential of the role.

Mark Elder conducts a beautifully detailed but restrained account of the score, depriving it of some of its fizz and fun. There is far more life to be extracted from it than either producer or conductor is prepared to allow.

The Royal Opera's new production of Die Entführung aus dem Serail also lacks clearly defined direction. When the Australian painter Sidney Nolan worked with the producer Elijah Moshinsky on Samson et Dalila a few years ago, the results were striking. In the case of Entführung they are puzzling. Nolan has created a series of brilliantly coloured front and back cloths, depicting figures floating through space, which are handsome in themselves but have little to do with either Mozart's Singspiel or with Timothy O'Brien's set. This consists of a pleasant north-African house facing a few stunted trees, all set within a false proscenium as though to emphasize the artificiality of the situation. There is none of the atmosphere of a prison in this seraglio and the action unfolds in the garden in full view of the inmates.

However, the story of true love triumphant and the nobility of forgiveness is stylishly sung, with Inga Nielsen outstanding in Konstanze's taxing arias and Lillian Watson as a forceful blonde who twists Osmin (a superb performance by Kurt Moll) round her little finger in the tea-party scene. The Pasha Selim appears to hanker after a European life-style as well as a European addition to his harem, to judge from his 18thcentury costume and wig, but it is a miscalculation to allow him to force his amorous attentions on Konstanze during the music which precedes "Martern aller Arten" and weakens the dénouement.

Georg Solti conducts a spic and span account of the music and expertly balances the pantomime elements against moments when profounder emotions rise to the

The production will be shown on BBC 2 on January 1 O

-MARGARET DAVIES



Washington during Vietnam: in Francis Coppola's new film Gardens of Stone, D. B. Sweeney is a naive recruit and Mary Stuart Masterson his bride

CINEMA

Newman tackles a classic

TENNESSEE Williams made his Broadway début as a playwright in 1945 with The Glass Menagerie. It is a semi-autobiographical work in which a young man seeks to escape from the stifling emotional grip of his mother, a faded and deserted Southern belle, only to endure guilt as his crippled sister succumbs to mental illness. The four-handed play—the remaining character is a gentleman caller whose potential as a suitor is destroyed when the mother discovers he is already bespoken—is an American classic, filmed with Gertrude Lawrence in 1950 and Katharine Hepburn in 1973.

Now Paul Newman, reminding us that the roots of his career lie in the New York theatre rather than Hollywood, has directed a compact new version; his wife, Joanne Woodward, is in the leading role, John Malkovich is her beleaguered son, Karen Allen the introverted daughter and James Naughton the gentleman caller. Joanne Woodward has played the part previously on stage, most recently at the Williamstown Festival three years ago.

Newman makes no attempt to open it up for the screen and the action is confined within a shabby St Louis apartment. But what makes his film more than mere filmed theatre is the cinematography of Fassbinder's former colleague, Michael Ballhaus, who shot *The Color of Money*. His camera prowls through Tony Walton's drab and claustrophobic set, subtly enlightening our perception of the characters and conveying a feeling of impending doom.

Newman respects, almost reveres, the piece and conscientiously resists traces of humour seeping out of its dark message. Joanne Woodward seems too intelligent to be the dotty Amanda: her manner is more that of a calculating matchmaker than a sad woman living in a fantasy world. The best performance is that of John Malkovich, which is layered with interesting ambiguities. He is among the most thoughtful of young American actors and this is his most satisfying screen work to date. But it is an austere film.

After a spate of Vietnam subjects in the past few months the director of *Apocalypse Now* has again focused his attention on that hideous conflict. Francis Coppola's new work, *Gardens of Stone*, is a relatively low-key exercise, the action taking place not in southeast Asia, but in Washington DC in 1968. James Caan is a senior

sergeant of the Old Guard, the ceremonial unit of the United States Army responsible for burying the war dead in Arlington National Cemetery. His own experience of combat in Vietnam has convinced him that the war is both morally wrong and unwinnable, and he endures the pain of watching the eager son (D. B. Sweeney) of a deceased former colleague strive for a posting that will bring widowhood for his young bride (Mary Stuart Masterson).

The film is concerned with the dilemma of a man who resents the political manipulation of the army, but is unable to do anything about it. His girlfriend, a Washington Post journalist played by Anjelica Huston, is an anti-war activist who is arrested for demonstrating. But the sergeant's military friends, who include James Earl Jones as the sergeant major and Dean Stockwell as the captain, are more at ease with themselves and reconciled to suppressing their private views. As Stockwell observes: "How can I have a sergeant who is a peacenik?"

Coppola is fascinated with the ceremonial details of the Arlington ritual, the measured drill movements and slow marches, the staccato rifle volleys and the folding of the flag from the coffin for presentation to the next-of-kin. He allows too much of the plot to occur off-screen for later reporting and a cynic would be forgiven for

suspecting that financial constraints were the reason. But Coppola has secured a breathtaking performance from James Caan, who invests that oft-derided figure the drill sergeant with an unprecedented depth of human feeling.

In the United States, Adrian Lyne's Fatal Attraction seems to have touched a raw nerve and pulled huge crowds into the cinemas. Michael Douglas is a lawyer who, when his wife is out of town, has a brief fling with an attractive blonde, Glenn Close, met at a party. What he does not appreciate, although her twitchy, nervous manner and strange dress sense are sending blinding signals to the audience, is that she is too neurotic to settle for a one-night stand and will want his soul. He tries to ditch her, but she pours acid all over his Volvo, kidnaps his child and stalks his wife at dead of night with a large knife.

Lyne, who made Flashdance and 9½ Weeks, has a keen sense of the meretricious, albeit disguised with the glossy technique of the television commercial. The film has made an inordinate amount of money already and cavilling will make little difference. But it does seem that he has taken a valid subject and degraded it into violent Grand Guignol melodrama (stealing a great movie moment from Clouzot's Les Diaboliques) which serves no one's case, least that of discarded lovers \bigcirc

-GEORGE PERRY

Turning over a new leaf

NON FICTION

The Palace of Westminster by Sir Robert Cooke Burton Skira/Macmillan, £30

POLITICIANS feel strongly about most things, but nothing stirs them more than contemplation of their own working environment. From the moment when King Edward V1 confirmed that Parliament could have its permanent home in what was formerly a royal palace the members began to complain about their accommodation. There were constant problems of heating and ventilation. The Lords chamber was not large enough for ceremonial occasions, while the overcrowded conditions in the Commons were aggravated by the addition of Scottish and Irish members, the "evaporation of their unhealthful breathings" defying solution.

The fire of 1834 settled that problem and provided the opportunity for rebuilding, but the Gothic designs of Barry and Pugin, and the scale of their expenditure, provoked heated controversy and prompted Disraeli to make a memorable contribution to the debate by suggesting to the House of Commons that the time had come to hang an

His argument was that no profession had ever succeeded in Britain until it was furnished "an example". Admiral Byng was hanged, whereupon the Navy increased in efficiency until it won the battle of Trafalgar. Archbishop Laud was decapitated, and thence forward the bishops behaved themselves, "That principle we have never yet applied to architects," Disraeli said. "And when a member of that profession was called to execute a very simple task and utterly failed after a large expenditure of public money, it really becomes the Government to consider the case, and they might rest assured that if once they contemplated the possibility of hanging an architect, they would put a stop to such blunders in the future.

The rebuilding of the Commons chamber after the bombing of 1941 roused equal fervour, but if confection should be, of the pre-

members were tempted, none called for the execution of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, Winston Churchill, in putting forward the motion to rebuild, pre-empted argument about its shape. It must, he said, be oblong. Semi-circular assemblies, which appealed to political theorists, enabled "every individual or every group to move round the centre, adopting various shades of pink as the weather changes."

The shape was not an issue, but there were long arguments between the Goths and the anti-Goths and loud cries about the need for more accommodation, demands which were not really met until the Norman Shaw buildings became available in the last decade, though many members were able to give colourful examples of their plight. One, Sir Paul Hawkins, revealed that his secretary had no access to his papers because he had been allocated a filing cabinet in the gentlemen's lavatory.

There are some good stories in The Palace of Westminster. It is a big book, always interesting and sometimes entertaining, lavish in its illustrations but at times rather too sparing in its text. Unhappily Sir Robert Cooke died before it was completed, and although he had apparently finished the text we must assume that he would have done more with it at the editing stage. Facts abound, but in parts they stand alone and disconnected, lacking explanation and the thread of history

-JAMES BISHOP

The Princess and the Pheasant and other recipes by Elizabeth Luard Bantam Press, £12.95

FROM ITS title The Princess and the Pheasant sounds as though it should occupy a place somewhere between Children's Books and Home Economics. It could be happily sold in either. Those looking for another "cook book" to grace their kitchen shelves may at first be disappointed; the author's tasteful line drawings have replaced the standard glossy photographs. There is no colourful indication of just how mountainous the perfect Mont Blanc



The interior of the House of Lords from the Bar in 1847

cise ochre hue or crusty consistency of a Saffron Loaf, or of the blood that should drip from the beak of a properly hung pheasant. But embellishing each recipe is a marvellous tale, a slice of culinary history, a local legend or a childhood anecdote.

The recipes originally appeared in The Field and many are clearly designed for the serious country kitchen. We are told how to calhow to select venison, and are reminded of the ideal way to cook partridge. As if to confirm the provenance of each dish, the accompanying anecdotes bear witness to a life of refinement and occasional exoticism: avocados cut with a silver knife from the Taxco mines of Mexico: ovsters consumed on each stroke of the midnight chimes on New Year's Eve: tea in Fortnum & Mason with a grandmother "slender in Balenciaga silk"

But non-Aga owners need not despair if they cannot find St George's mushrooms, a brace of

pheasants or the green oysters of Marenne. Alternatives include a recipe for the perfect fish and chips, for pig's trotters and for champ and boxty, old Irish dishes which grant the humble potato new culinary distinction.

For those unwilling to try even the simplest rustic dish, the lively prose still makes excellent bedtime reading. As well as providing vicarious gastronomic pleasure, it culate the age of a pheasant and offers an unrivalled selection of culinary trivia. There is apparently no law of trespass in Scandinavia, though latter-day Vikings may battle-axe you for pinching the cloudberries on their land. And did you know that all English snails are edible but must be quarantined to purge their digestive systems of dangerous vegetable matter? And the title piece tells how Jason and his Argonauts introduced the pheasant to Western Europe. It is ironic that so excellent a cook book is destined to spend more time at the bedside than in the kitchen C

-JAMES DELINGPOLE

James Bishop assesses a pictorial history of the Palace of Westminster; James Delingpole recommends a cook book for bedside reading: and Ian Stewart on the pick of the month's fiction



RECENT FICTION

A Woman of Judah. A Novel and Fifteen Stories by Ronald Frame Bodlev Head, £11.95 The Coast of Bohemia by Zdena Tomin Hutchinson, £11.95 Chinese Whispers by Maurice Leitch Hutchinson, £7.95 Triad by Derek Lambert Hamish Hamilton, £10.95

A PREFATORY note to A Woman of Judah reveals that its author has done his research into "certain remote happenings in pre-War 'Wessex'" and scoured the local press of the period. Whatever imagination he has brought to bear on these happenings Ronald Frame's novel about the strange relationship between a doctor and his wife in a West Country town in the 1930s suggests an arbitrary selection of choice items. Dr Davies's mys-

terious and seductive wife is said by two of Ivell Abbas's most prominent male citizens (Messrs Fishlock and Gilbev) to have committed an act of gross indecency in their presence. The doctor is subsequently found hanged, a baker's boy is debagged by two men behind the golf course, and Gilbey, who may have been one of them, also kills himself.

The narrative is in the form of a reminiscence, related to a journalist by the lawver Pendlebury, now an elderly and distinguished judge, of the events of a long hot summer. It offers randomly a number of clues to the riddle of the Davieses' unorthodox marriage. Mrs Davies is seen wearing a headscarf on a day of broiling heat (scarf obviously hiding love bites). Her opposite neighbour, Mrs Murgatroyd. hears screams in the middle of the night. Somebody in the lawyer's office observes that Dr Davies has nicks in both his ears (a randy little tart his wife must be).

flavour of items culled from the newspaper files, the ambiguity that surrounds Pendlebury's relationship with this odd couple is admirably sustained. He is obsessively curious about them both and physically attracted to Mrs Davies. Her husband spies on them though it is never clear what he is thinking. Pendlebury has erotic dreams about Mrs Davies and yet "Nothing happens . . . in this disabling, paralysing delirium of midsummer madness". But madness may have been what the

couple drove each other to. Mr Frame is a talented writer with an original, arresting turn of phrase. He shows us a town falling under the spell of an alluring woman and then casting her in the role of rampant whore. But as an essay in ambiguity his novel tails off inconclusively (we follow Mrs Davies through a succession of marriages to prosperous elderly men) as his short stories included in this volume also tend to do.

The narrator of Zdena Tomin's The Coast of Bohemia, a Czech dissident, describes the hospital in which she recovers from her traumatic experiences as "an entire habitat of despair and brisk care attempting to put a bright face on things". There is an echo here of the prevalent atmosphere in the mental hospital in which Maurice Leitch's Chinese Whispers is set. Leitch's hospital in Northern Ireland, whose haunted, deranged inmates are eerily evoked in Sam Hunter's illustrations (much more effective than the illustrations in Hutchinson's new novella imprint have hitherto been), might be taken as a metaphor for the political condition of that strife-torn police chief and a Chinese intelliprovince. But there is nothing metaphorical in Zdena Tomin's

manual labourers and artists as (Kwan Tai's son as it happens). roadsweepers. Secret meetings are held, proclamations issued and coded messages exchanged in public lavatories. The narrator, a woman in her 30s who works as a translator, is a member of a group called the Citizens' Committee. What are memorably evoked in her grim winter's tale are the quite a good read C While this has the gossipy cancer of suspicion, fear of

under the repressive regime of

betrayal by the enemy within and the brutality of the secret police. Against this harsh background Tomin draws a touching portrait of this brave but baffled woman's love for an enchanting but mentally damaged girl called Norma

Though the inmates of the hospital in Chinese Whispers have a child-like quality, here, too, violence threatens to erupt. If this institution is a metaphor for the problems afflicting Ulster, Maurice Leitch does not press the point. His is a bleak tale plainly told about the impact on the patients, and on the male nurse who tells the story, of the arrival of a new patient, Gavin, a child murderer. The creepy Gavin's attempt to undermine the nurse's authority is more convincingly sinister than the spooky events that keep the nurse awake at night in his mobile home

"Death from five thunderbolts". a curse invoked by the Hong Kong police chief to indicate the likely fate of treacherous gangleaders in Triad, is more suggestive of pantomime villainy than contemporary realities of the kind with which Zdena Tomin and Maurice Leitch are concerned. But when a shoeshine boy insists with eloquent evasiveness that "the wings of my thoughts beat slowly today" he is actually declining to help a detective (who knows that he keeps five packets of No 4 heroin among his brushes and tins of polish) with his inquiries into international drug trafficking.

The story involves wretched victims of heroin addiction, mutilated victims of gang rivalriescertainly it is no pantomime. The gence agent have different reasons for seeking to subvert Kwan Tai, account of the fate of dissidents who is head of the territory's most powerful secret society, the 18G.

On the other hand a murderous In this world professors work as movie star, one Michael Lo and a glamorous American missionary, who wants to convert the Dragon Head to Christianity. contribute substantially to the colourful improbability of Derek Lambert's scenario. He has written an adventure story, whatever his aspirations, and as such it is

-JAN STEWART

The capital list

A discerning guide to entertainment in the city

Not to be missed . . . Dame Edna's Back With a Vengeance!—if you dare—and the London International Mime Festival Stay clear of ... Norman Mailer's crude film Tough Guys Don't Dance and Holiday on Ice at Wembley claiming to be "mirth-provoking"









The guitarist John Williams takes part in the opening concert of A Theme, With Variations, a celebration of British music at the Barbican. Jonathan

Miller's fresh look at The Barber of Seville for the Coliseum. The Poliska Company from Prague join in the London International Mime Festival

THEATRE

Where applicable, a special telephone number is given for credit card bookings. The address & telephone number of each theatre are given only on the first occasion it appears in each section.

Acting Shakespeare. Stunning oneman show by Ian McKellen, Until Jan WC2 (839 4401, cc 240 7200).

. And Then There Were None. Agatha Christie's thriller with Jack Hedley, Rodney Bewes & Glynis Barber, Duke of York's, St Martin's

Lane, WC2 (836 5122, cc). Back with a Vengeance! Barry Humphries, in his many disguises, outrages, torments & flings "gladdies" at his audience. Prenare for the unexpected Strand, Aldwych, WC2 (836) 2660, CC). REVIEW ON P68

Beyond Reasonable Doubt. In Jeffrey Archer's courtroom drama Frank Finlay plays the Chairman of the Bar Council accused of murdering his wife. With Wendy Craig & Andrew Cruickshank. Painstaking stuff. Oueens, Shaftesbury Ave, W1 (734 1166, CC). REVIEWED NOV, 1987.

Countrymania, A trilogy of mid-18thcentury social comedies by Carlo Goldoni, reworked by director Mike Alfreds. Olivier, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1 (928 2252, cc).

Entertaining Strangers. David Edgar's expansive community play about the clash of wills between a 19th-century Dorchester brewery proprietress (Judi Dench) & an evangelical parson (Tim-Pigott-Smith). Audiences are expected

Fathers & Sons. Turgenev's novel of mid-19th-century Russia in a richly truthful, if selective, version by Brian Friel & with imaginative performances by Alec McCowen, Richard Pasco &. most affectingly, Robin Bailey. Lyt-

The Foreigner. Nicholas Lyndhurst in the new comedy from Larry Shue. Albery, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (836 3878 CC 379 6565)

J. J. Farr. Albert Finney & Bob Peck in a new play by Ronald Harwood about a former Catholic priest. released after being held hostage. Phoenix, Charing Cross Rd, WC2 (836 2294,CC). REVIEW ON P69.

Lettice & Lovage, Maggie Smith & Margaret Tyzack lead the cast in Peter Shaffer's play about the relationship between two formidable women. Globe, Shaftesbury Ave. W1 (437 3667, cc 741 9999).

A Man For All Seasons. Charlton Heston plays Sir Thomas More in Frank Hauser's revival of the Robert Bolt play, Benjamin Whitrow as Thomas Cromwell & Roy Kinnear as

the common man are both excellent. Until Jan 9, Savov, Strand, WC2 (836

A Midsummer Night's Dream. Bill Alexander's modern-dress production is short on the poetry but offers some cheerful skirmishing. David Haig is Bottom, Barbican, EC2 (638 8891, 628

Old Year's Eve. Drama from Paul Speyer, set against a backdrop of South African unrest, in which a family's New Year's Eve celebrations take an unexpected turn. The Pit,

One for the Road. Willy Russell's play provides Russ Abbott with his first straight role—as a man harking back to his student days on the eye of his 40th birthday. Lyric, Shaftesbury Ave, W1 (437 3686, cc)

The Rover, John Barton's hilarious staging of Aphra Behn's restoration romp, Until Jan 16, Mermaid, Puddle Dock, EC4 (236 5568, cc).

Separation. David Suchet & Saskia Reeves star in Tom Kempinski's sparky romance. Comedy, Panton St. SW1 (930 2578, cc 839 1438).

Serious Money, Caryl Churchill's brilliant comedy of City business. framed, surprisingly, in rhyme. Wyndham's, Charing Cross Rd, WC2

A Small Family Business. Ayckbourn's comedy about corruption in a family

business grows steadily blacker, ending with a dénouement that is hard to accept. Stephen Moore takes the lead. Olivier, National Theatre.

Speculators, City comedy from Tony Marchant, set in the dealing room of a major bank. The Pit. Barbican.

Ting Tang Mine. Robert Glenister as a nan who returns from the Napoleonic Wars to his Cornish village with a mysterious fortune, Until Jan 30.

Twelfth Night. Kenneth Branagh directs Richard Briers, Frances Barber & Anton Lesser in the Renaissance Theatre Company's third production. Until Jan 16. Riverside, Crisp Rd, W6 (748 3354, cc 379 4444).

A View From The Bridge, Arthur Miller's near-classic, well directed by Alan Ayckhourn, Michael Gambon excels as the Brooklyn longshoreman. Aldwych, WC2 (836 6404, cc). Waiting for Godot, Alec McCowen &

John Alderton play Beckett's two tramps, Lyttelton, National Theatre. The Winter's Tale, Terry Hands's unaffected Stratford production, with Paul Shelley conveying the pointless jealousy of Leontes, & Penny Downie doubling as Hermione & Perdita Barbican

You Never Can Tell, Michael Horden, Irene Worth & Michael Denison in a revival of the Shaw comedy. Haymarket. SW1 (930 9832, cc).

FIRST NIGHTS

Andromache, Janet Suzman takes the title role in Jonathan Miller's production of the Jean Racine classic. Opens Jan 19, Old Vic. Waterloo Rd. SE1 (928 7616, cc 261 1821).

Company/Kids' Stuff, Tim Pigott-Smith directs Julian Curry in a new Samuel Beckett adaptation, with the Australian "Kids' Stuff" Opens Ian 18. Donmar Warehouse, Earlham St, WC2 (240 8230, cc 379 6565).

Love Songs of World War III. Poet/ playwright Adrian Mitchell displays his talent as a theatre lyric writer. Several songs from RSC & National Theatre shows are included. Jan 11 & 12. Cottesloe, National Theatre, South Bank SEI (928 2252 cc)

Shirley Valentine. Pauline Collins stars in the new Willy Russell play, directed by Simon Callow, Opens Jan 21, Vaudeville, Strand, WC2 (836 9987, cc). South Pacific. First major production of the Rodgers & Hammerstein musical in Britain for 37 years stars Gemma Craven & Emile Belcourt. Opens Jan 20. Prince of Wales, Coventry St. W1 (839 5987, cc 240 7200).

FRINGE

Bells are Ringing. The award-winning Lesley Mackie stars in this revival of Jule Styne's great Broadway musical.

Directed by John Doyle, Until Jan 30. Greenwich Theatre, Crooms Hill, SE10 (858 7755, cc 853 3800) Between East & West. An actress &

theatre director defect to New York. Sheila Allen & John Woodvine star. Until Jan 16. Hampstead Theatre, Swiss Cottage Centre, NW3 (722

Black Love Songs. Identity & relationships come under scrutiny in Temba Theatre Company's double bill of Black American plays, Jan 5-13, Young Vic Studio, The Cut. SE1 (928) 6363, cc 379 4444)

Dreams of San Francisco. All-woman cast, including Joanna Monroe & the alternative comedian Jenny Lecoat, in the tale of a feminist theatre company Until Jan 9, Bush, Shepherds Bush Green, W12 (743 3388). Love's a Luxury, Classic British farce.

Until Jan 21. Orange Tree, 45 Kew Rd, Man to Man. Tilda Swinton reflects on her past in Manfred Karger's new show. Jan 4-23. Royal Court. Sloane

Sq. SW1 (730 1745, cc)

An Outbreak of God in Area Nine. Humorist Ken Campbell & his troupe of impressionists tackle God. James Anderton & many more. Until Jan 16. Young Vic, The Cut, SE1 (928 6363, CC 379 4444)

The Traveller. David Threlfall & Morag Hood in Jean Claude Van Itallie's play about convalescence & love. Based on the experiences of Joseph Chaikin, the creator of New York's Open Theatre, Until Jan 9. Almeida, Almeida St. N1 (359 4404). Turcaret. John Norman's adaptation of Lasage's 17th-century treatise on taxation, fraud & greed. Opens Jan 4. Gate Theatre Club, 11 Pembridge Rd. W11 (229.0706)

Ubu. Experience the degenerate Papa Ubu's fall & rise in Alfred Jarry's comic epic, presented in a new translation by Spire Limited. Dec 28-Jan 16. Latchmere, 503 Battersea Park Rd, SW11 (228 2620).

STAYERS

Antony & Cleopatra, Olivier, National Theatre (928 2252); Cats, New London (405 0072); Chess, Prince Edward (734 8951); Follies, Shaftesbury (379 5399); 42nd Street, Drury Lanc (836 8108); High Society, Victoria Palace (834 1317), until Jan 16; Kiss Me Kate, Old Vic (928 7616), will transfer to the Savoy later; Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Ambassador's (836 6111); Me & My Girl, Adelphi (836 7611); Les Misérables, Palace (434 0909); The Mousetrap, St Martin's (836 1443); The Phantom of the Opera, Her Majesty's (839 2244); Run For Your Wife, Criterion (930 3216); Starlight Express, Apollo Victoria (828 8665).

Bivouac. Insect societies are the inspiration for the Youth Dance Project's new show a veritable hive of creative activity, Jan 6-9. The Place, 17 Dukes Rd, WC1 (387 0031, cc) London Festival Ballet. Peter Schau-

DANCE

fuss's complicated production of Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker, Until Jan 16. Festival Hall, South Bank, SE1

Royal Ballet, Peter Wright's production of Giselle, the classic tale of a peasant girl wounded in love Jan 6, 7 14, 19, 23, 27, 29. Triple Bill includes Ashton's translation to dance of Shakespeare's fantasy of fairies & mechanicals. The Dream & The Concert, choreographed by Robbins. Jan 9, 12, 20, 22, 26. The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, WC2 (240 1066/1911, cc),

Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet, The New Year season begins with The Snow Queen, Bintley's lively interpretation of the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale. Jan 5-9. Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Ave, EC1 (278 8916, cc).

The World in Two or Three, Philippa Donnellan's vigorous choreography meets Keith Khan's colourful set in this survey of the different communities living in today's East End. Jan 27-30. Chisenhale Dance Space, 64-84 Chisenhale Rd. E3 (981 6617).

CINEMA

The following films are expected to be thowing in London or on general release at some time during the month. Programmes often change at short notice. Consult a local or daily newspaper for

Bigfoot & The Hendersons (PG). An amiable comedy, directed by William Dear, in which a Seattle family led by John Lithgow & Meg Dillon find a "bigfoot" monster in the woods & introduce it to urban life. An ET variant which originated in the Steven

Cry Freedom (PG). Richard Attenborough's story of Steven Biko, the black activist who died in police custody in Rhodesia in 1977. REVIEWED

The Dead (U). John Huston's last film, adapted by his son Tony from James Jovce's story in Dubliners, is exquisitely told. REVIEWED DEC, 1987.

Fatal Attraction (18). Adrian Lynedirects Michael Douglas as a man pursued fanatically by a casual lover (Glenn Close). Opens Jan 15, Plaza, Lower Regent St, SW1 (200 0200, CC Housekeeping (PG). Bill Forsyth's first 240 7200). REVIEW ON P71. Gardens of Stone (15), James Caan &

Anielica Huston star in Francis Coppola's new drama, set in a US Army training camp in 1968. Opens Jan 22. Cannon, Shaftesbury Ave, WC2 (836 8861, CC). REVIEW ON P71.

The Glass Menagerie (PG). Paul Newman directs his wife Joanne Woodward, Karen Allen & John Malkovich in an uncut version of Tennessee Williams's stage classic. Opens Jan 15, Cannon, Haymarket, W1 (839 1527), REVIEW ON P71

lynne Robinson, describes how two orphaned teenage girls in the 1950s live with an eccentric aunt who never throws away newspapers or empty tins. Forsyth's offbeat approach only because of Christine Lahti's outstanding performance.

The Kitchen Toto (15). The story of a man's home in Kenya, 1950, during the fight for independence. Directed by Harry Hook with Bob Peck, Phyllis

Logan & Edwin Mahinda in the lead roles, REVIEWED DEC, 1987. Little Dorrit (U), Christine Ebzard's loving evocation of Dickens's novel is a formidable achievement, abetted by a vast array of actors headed by Alecwood, Max Wall, and Cyril Cusack, with tiny Sarah Pickering totally

believable in the title role. Maurice (15). Another beautiful Merchant Ivory film, based on the posthumously published E.M. Forster novel & let down only by a loose script. REVIEWED NOV 1987

Near Dark (18). Curiously paced thriller which sees Oklahoma farm boy Caleb (Adrian Pasdar) ensnared by chance acquaintance (Jenny Wright) & introduced to a group of itinerant vampires. Kathryn Bigelow's first major feature has atmosphere but sacrifices tension for violence. Opens Jan 8, Cannons, Oxford St. W1 (636 0310); Panton St, SW1 (930 0631).

No Way Out (15), Kevin Costner is a Washington bigwig (Gene Hackman). When the girl they are both involved with (Sean Young) is killed Costner is assigned to catch the chief suspecthimself, Roger Donaldson's thriller is highly topical. Opens Jan 15. Odeon,

Sammy & Rosie Get Laid (18). Hanif Kureishi wrote & Stephen Frears directed My Reautiful Laundrette, but their new film is less clearly structured & flounders in mixing its story of filial relationships with a muddled diatribe against Thatcherite England. A fine cast headed by the marvellous Shashi Frances Barber as his son & white

daughter-in-law, & Claire Bloom as an old flame, ensure the film's watchability Opens Ion 15 Lumiere St Martin's Lane, WC2 (836 0691, cc); Gate, Notting Hill Gate, W11 (727 4043); Screen on the Green, 83 Upper St, NI

Wish You Were Here (15), Writer David Leland makes his directorial début, with a calculated, jaundiced view of a stuffy seaside resort in early 1950s Britain, in which a free-and-easy teenager Emily Lloyd Jaments being born ahead of her time and Tom Bell is a sad, would-be opportunist.









Night by Robert Bevan in an exhibition of the Camden painters at Christie's; and a Steiff teddy bear among childhood delights for sale at Sotheby's

CLASSICS

BARBICAN HALL EC2 (638 8891, 628 8795, cc).

Philharmonia Orchestra. Owain Arwel Hughes conducts Mozart's Piano Concerto No 21, with Stephen Hough as soloist, & Rimsky-Korsakov's Sheherazade, Jan 3, 7,30pm.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Jane Glover conducts Mozart's Symphony No 39 & Beethoven's Choral Symphony, with the London Choral Society. Jan 5, 7.45pm.

A Theme with Variations: A celebration of British music in London between January & June. Opens with three concerts by the London Symphony Orchestra who play Vaughan Williams, Steve Gray, Elgar, under Colin Davis, Jan 8; Elgar, Hoddinott, Walton, under Richard Hickox, Jan 24; Robert Saxton, Walton, Vaughan Williams, under Jeffrey Tate, Jan 31. Birtwistle Festival: Four days of evening concerts given by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Sinfonietta & Endymion Ensemble, devoted to the music of Harrison Birtwistle; plus free films, talks, open rehearsals & the composer in conversation. Jan 10-13. Orchestre de Paris. Daniel Barenboim conducts Schoenberg's Verklärte Nacht & Bruckner's Symphony No 9. Jan 24, 3,15pm.

FESTIVAL HALL South Bank Centre, SE1 (928 3191, cc 928.88000

London Sinfonietta 20th Season: The orchestra give two concerts in celebration of their 20th season. Programmes include first performances of works by Harrison Birtwistle, conducted by himself, Henze, conducted by Simon Rattle, Simon Holt, conducted by David Atherton; & staged

performances of The Seven Deadly Sins by Weill & L'Heure espagnole by Ravel. Jan 24, 3pm & 7.30pm.

BBC Symphony Orchestra. Pierre Boulez conducts the revised version of his own work Le Visage nuptial, & music by Benjamin, Messiaen, Schoenberg, Jan 25, 7.30pm. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin

Mehta conducts two performances of Schubert's Symphony No 6 & Strauss's Sinfonia Domestica. Jan 26 &

Philharmonia Orchestra & Chorus. Yevgeny Syetlanov conducts works by Glinka, Tchaikovsky & Prokofiev's Alexander Nevsky. Jan 30, 7.30pm. Shura Cherkassky, piano. Lully, Schumann, Franck, J. Hofmann, Chopin. Jan 31, 3.15pm.

PURCELL ROOM

South Bank Centre Park Lane Group Young Artists & 20th-Century Music Series: Five days of concerts at which young musicians perform 20th-century music, with special emphasis on the works of Judith Weir & Thea Musgrave, Jan

11-15, 6pm & 7.30pm QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL South Bank Centre.

Mozart Fortepiano Series: John Eliot Gardiner conducts the English Baroque Soloists in Mozart's Symphonies No 32 & 36 & the Piano Concerto K 491, with Malcolm Bilson, forteniano, Jan 7, 7,45pm. London Orpheus Choir & Orchestra

perform Handel's Messiah in its entirety, under James Gaddarn. Jan 9, 7,30pm. Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields,

directed by Kenneth Sillitoe, perform works by Haydn, Mozart, Michael Haydn, Britten. Jan 10, 7.45pm. Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment,

Haydn's L'Infedelta delusa on period instruments, Jan 13, 7,45pm. City of London Sinfonia play works by

the French composers Roussel, Faure, Ravel, Bizet, with Cécile Ousset, piano. Jan 21, 7,45pm. The Italian Inspiration: English

Chamber Orchestra give two concerts under Raymond Leppard. With the Tallis Chamber Choir, Ann Murray, mezzo-soprano, & David Rendall, tenor, they perform works by Monteverdi, Cavalli, Cesti, Jan 26; with Sarah Walker, mezzo-soprano, William Bennett & Kate Hill, flutes, they play Cimarosa, Pergolesi, Haydn, Henze,

Rossini Jan 27: 7 45nm London Sinfonietta. Diego Masson conducts a programme of works by Ligeti, Kurtág, Abrahamsen, Webern.

Jan 28, 7.45pm. The King's Singers present a programme entitled Towards the New World, which includes the London première of McCabe's Scenes in America Deserta, Jan 29, 7,30pm. ST JOHN'S

Smith Sq, SW1 (222 1061, cc). Ralph Kirshbaum, cello, Roger Vig-

noles, piano. Beethoven, Carter, Schumann, Jan 4, 1pm. Beaux Arts Trio. Mozart, Beethoven. Jan 11, 1pm.

Midsummer Opera, conducted by David Roblou, give a staged performance of Handel's Atalanta, Jan 14, Malcolm Bilson, fortepiano. Haydn,

Mozart, C.P.E. Bach. Jan 18, 1pm. Orchestra of St John's. John Lubbock conducts Violin Concertos by Fauré & Mendelssohn, with Rodolfo Bonucci as soloist, Jan 20, 7,30pm. Lontano, directed by Odaline de la

under Sigiswald Kuijken, perform Another Land, turn to France, with works by Debussy/Boulez, Dusapin, Rodney Bennett, Jolas. Jan 21, 7.30pm Guarneri Quartet. Haydn, Sibelius. Jan

25.1pm. Choir of Westminster Cathedral. David

Hill directs music by Palestrina & by the Mexican baroque composer Juan Gutierrez de Padilla. Jan 28, 7.30pm. WIGMORE HALL 36 Wigmore St. W1 (935 2141, cc).

Lucia Popp, soprano, Geoffrey Parsons, piano. Lieder by Schubert, Schumann, Schoenberg, Strauss. Jan 1.7.30nm Gabrieli Consort & Players play

seasonal music from 17th-century Germany by Schütz, Praetorius, Schein & Biber, Jan 2, 7,30pm. Endymion Ensemble with Ian Partridge, tenor, Stephen Varcoe, baritone, Prunella Scales, speaker. Works by Poulenc & Walton's Façade. Jan 3,

András Schiff, piano, plays Bach's English Suites, Two-part Inventions & Three-part Inventions. Jan 6 & 9, 7.30pm. Hanover Band, Roy Goodman directs

Haydn Symphonies & Mozart's Flute Concerto No 1, with Philippa Davies as soloist. Jan 10, 11.30am. Gabriel Tacchino, piano. Poulenc, Prokofiev, Schumann, Khatchatur-

ian, Jan 13, 7,30pm. Mady Mesplé, soprano, Gabriel Tacchino, piano, Songs by Poulenc, Liszt, Wolf, Obradors, Roussel; arias by Offenbach, Jan 16, 7,30pm.

Nash Ensemble continue their Paris 1867-1987 series with works by Saint-Saëns, Dutilleux, Franck, & songs by Duparc & Chausson sung by Felicity Lott, soprano, Jan 23, 7.30pm. Martinez, in their series Songs from Julian Bream, guitar. Jan 24, 4pm.

OPERA

ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA London Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (836 3161, cc 240 5258).

The Barber of Seville. Jonathan Miller's new production. Jan 2, 5, 8. REVIEW ON P70 Rigoletto. Positively the last chance to

see Jonathan Miller's landmark staging, with John Rawnsley & Arthur Davies, Jan 6, 11, 14, 21, Der Rosenkavalier. Valerie Masterson

& Jean Rigby sing the Marschallin & Octavian for the first time with John Tomlinson as Baron Ochs, under the baton of Christian Badea, Jan 7, 12, 15, 20, 23, 26, 29, Hansel & Gretel, David Pountney's

new production, with Pauline Tinsley as the Witch, Norman Bailey as Peter & Ethna Robinson & Cathryn Pope singing the title roles. Jan 9, 13, 16, 19, 22, 27, 30, Madam Butterfly. Revival of Graham

Vick's grimly realistic production, with Janice Cairns repeating her moving portraval of the title role & Edmund Barham as Pinkerton. Jan 28. ROYAL OPERA Covent Garden, WC2 (240 1066/1911,

L'Italiana in Algeri, Agnes Baltsa sings

the title role in Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's new production, borrowed from Vienna, with Deon van der Walt as Lindoro & Alessandro Corbelli as Taddeo; Gabriele Ferro conducts. Jan 2, 5, 8, 11, 13, 16, Parsifal. Bernard Haitink conducts Bill

Bryden's new production, designed by Hayden Griffin, with Peter Seiffert making his house début in the title role, Robert Lloyd as Gurnemanz, Waltraud Meier as Kundry, Ingvar Wixell as Amfortas, Jan 28, 30,

EXHIBITIONS BRITISH MUSEUM

Great Russell St, WC1 (636 1555). Glass of the Caesars. The work of highly skilled Roman glass-makers brought together from major collections. Until Mar 6. Mon-Sat 10am-4.30pm, Sun 2.30-5.30pm. £1.50, concessions 50p

CHRISTIE'S 8 King St. SW1 (839 9060). The Painters of Camden Town 1905-20. Sickert lovers will enjoy this show; it surveys the Camden group of 16 male

artists which included Spencer Gore, Augustus John, Wyndham Lewis, Henry Lamb & Lucien Pissarro, Jan 4-24. Daily 9am-4.45pm. CRAFTS COUNCIL GALLERY 12 Waterloo Pl, SW1 (930 4811).

Constructivism in Art & Design. Fur-& drawings, all from the University of East Anglia's collection covering the period 1916-18. Eclectic display of the movement's scope. Jan 20-Apr 3. Tues-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2-5pm, HAYWARD GALLERY South Bank, SEI (928 3144).

Lucien Freud, Francis Bacon had better look to his laurels—his old rival Freud is coming in triumph to the Hayward. Freud's realistic art was once regarded as strictly not for export. but this exhibition has been seen at the Pompidou Centre & will go on to Berlin. If there is a School of London, Freud is at the head of it, not least because he is now the artist whom other painters whatever their persuasion, genuinely admire. Feb 4-Apr 17. Mon-Wed 10am-8pm, Thurs-Sat until 6pm, Sun noon-6pm, £3, conSALLY HUNTER FINE ART 2 Motcomb St. SW1 (235 0934). Modern British London. The capital as seen by painters who lived here in the middle years of this century. Jan 12-29. Mon-Fri 10am-6pm.

GILLIAN JASON GALLERY 42 Inverness St. NW1 (267 4835) Markey Robinson, First London exhibition for the Dublin artist known as the "Irish Lowry". Jan 6-30. Tues-MUSEUM OF LONDON

London Wall, EC2 (600 3699). Whitefriars: The Unique Glasshouse. The story of a small plasshouse which opened near Fleet St in about 1708. A glittering display of everything from mosaics to cataract lenses. Until end 1988. Tues-Sat 10am-6pm. Sun MUSEUM OF MANKIND

Burlington Gdns, W1 (437 2224). The Living Arctic: Hunters of the Canadian North. Both a modern & a historical look at the Indian & Inuit people's way of life. For the year. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2.30-6pm. NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM Greenwich, SE10 (858 4422).

Pull Together: The National Union of Seamen 1887-1987, A lively history of the union from its earliest origins up to its role in the Falklands campaign. Until Apr 10. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm. Sun 2-5pm. £1.80, concessions 90p. NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

St Martin's PL WC2 (930 1552) Vicky: Cartoons by Victor Weisz 1913-66. The first major retrospective of the Hungarian political cartoonist, featuring his work for, among others, the Daily Mirror & the New Statesman and some material never seen before.

Until Mar 6. Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 2-6pm. £2, con-NATIONAL THEATRE

South Bank, SE1 (928 2033). Hockney Posters. On show are more

than 120 posters produced by Hockney to advertise 25 years of exhibitions. Until Jan 20, Mon-Sat 10am-11pm. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM Cromwell Rd. SW7 (589 6323). First Impressions: The British discovery

of Australia. A major new exhibition to celebrate the bicentenary of Australia. Included is artwork from Sydney Parkinson (who sailed with Cantain Cook) & the natural-history painter Ferdinand Bauer, Jan 8-Mar 20. Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 1-6pm. £2, concessions £1 ROYAL ACADEMY

Piccadilly, W1 (734 9052) Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet

England 1200-1400. A magnificent display of more than 600 works of Gothic art. Until Mar 6. Daily 10am-6pm. £4, concessions £3. SOTHEBY'S Bond St. W1 (493 8080).

Childhood, Exhibits from both museums & private collections revealing aspects of childhood. Among the more obscure are Aloysius the teddy bear from Brideshead Revisited & an Eton desk carved with generations of initials. Jan 2-27. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun noon-5pm.

VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM Cromwell Rd, SW7 (589 6371).

Salvatore Ferragamo: The Art of the Shoe 1927-60. More than 200 of Ferragamo's shoes on display, all put together with art & sole. Until Feb 7. Mon-Sat 10am-5.50pm, Sun 2.30-5.50nm Voluntary donation, suggested £2, concessions 50p.

AFTER DARK

Africa Centre. Irresistible hi-life sounds & occasional bands at this cultural centre which also offers a superb African restaurant downstairs. Saturdays & Sundays. 38 King St, WC2 (836

Alice in Wonderland, Best psychedelic night in town, with music from Velvet Underground, Hendrix & lots of other groovy people. Mondays. Gossips, 69 Dean St. W1 (734 0201).

Comedy Store. Oldest & best alternative comedy venue. Often abrasive

(especially the open-mike spot) but comedy bills on the alternative circuit. never disappointing. Saturdays & Sundays. Leicester Sq. WC2 (839 6665) Meccano. Tacky but intimate comedy

club, hosted Saturdays by the strange & frightening James Macabre. Fridays & Saturdays, Camden Head, Camden Passage, N1 (800 2236). Le Palais. The revamped Palais now packing them in with the classic soul/

funk fusion. Le Palais, 242 Shepherd's Rush Rd. W6 (748 2812). South of Deptford. Consistently coming up with some of the strongest Saturdays. Tramshed, 51 Woolwich New Rd, SE18 (855 3371). Sunday Night at the Tunnel Palladium.

Poking fun at the current vogue for music-hall type variety, Malcolm Hardee's alternative circuit venue is a welcome all-comedy break. The Mitre, Tunnel Ave, SE10 (information: 853 1918) The Wag. Regular jazz nights (Mon-

days) draw a crowd of sophisticated clubbers. Other nights have different themes, but are never intimidating. 35 Wardour St. W1 (437 5534).

JAZZ

Blues in the Night, American singer Carol Woods leads a programme of blues & jazz music from the 1930s. Piccadilly, Denman St, W1 (240 8230, Louis Armstrong & Fats Waller Revi-

sited. Satchmo & Fats celebrated by two of Britain's finest jazz musicians, Dave Lee (piano) & Digby Fairweather (trumpet). Jan 27. Purcell Room, South Bank, SEI (928 3191, CC 928 8800)

Acker Bilk. Back again, tipping his

bowler to all the standards. Jan 13, 100 Club. 100 Oxford St. W1 (636 0933) George Coleman. American tenor sax king & former Coltrane disciple here to show the youngsters how it's done. Jan 4-17. Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith St. W1

Electric Dream. Julian Bahula leads his new outfit through a very danceable Afro-jazz set. Jan 3. 100 Club.

Benny Goodman Carnegie Hall Concert. On the 50th anniversary of Goodman's classic Carnegie Hall appearance, the Henry MacKenzie Sextet & the Ray Wordsworth Big piano. Jan 7. Bass Clef.

Band re-create the sounds & the spirit. Jan 16. Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank, SEI (928 3191, cc 928 8800) Dave Green/Bruce Turner/Lol Coxhill Trio. Fascinating mix of Green's bebop base, Turner's sax & Coxhill's free improvisation, Jan 3, Bass Clef, 85 Coronet St. N1 (729 2440) Jazz 'n' Joplin. Selections from Jelly Roll Morton, A.J. Piron & the man

cessions & everybody all day Mon &

after 6pm Tues & Wed £1.50.

himself. A ragged time to be had by all. Jan 22. Queen Elizabeth Hall. Bob Sydor Quartet. Sydor's tenor sax complements John Pearce's choppy

ROCK

Eric Clapton. Self-confessed "rock dinosaur" & legendary blues guitarist holds court. It might be 23 years since Cream of Clapton album has won him a new generation of fans. Expect to see some famous faces turning up on stage. Jan 25-Feb 4. Albert Hall, SW7 (589 8212, cc). Depeche Mode. The recent more

industrial tones have rejuvenated the one-time teen idols, but their sound is still firmly rooted in clean, synthetic pop. Jan 11 & 12. Wembley Arena, Middx (902 1234, cc 741 8989). Marillion, Continual critical hostility

has not halted the rise in popularity of Fish & the boys. After their recent sell-out gigs at Wembley, they return for two further dates with their melodic rock & fantastical lyrics. Jan 16 & 17. Hammersmith Odeon, W6 (748 Motley Crue, Former heavy-metallers

now treading a more commercial path after the success of their "Girls, Girls, Girls" single. Jan 13. Wembley



Doctor in the dock: Hawley Harvey Crippen stands trial at Bow Street for the murder of his wife, with his typist/mistress, Ethel Le Neve, beside him

LIST OF THE MONTH

METROPOLITAN MURDER

Interest in London's homicides is never less than intense. Here are 10 that are still causing spinal shivers:

1 Jack the Ripper. 1988 is the 100th anniversary of the Whitechapel murders & seven books on the subject have appeared in the past six months alone. Latest theories smash Stephen Knight's "freemason conspiracy" idea and redirect suspicion on Montague Druitt, homosexual lunatic and friend of royalty.

2 Dr Crippen. Recent attempts to rehabilitate "Poor Old Crippen", arrested in Canada in 1910, have included the suggestion that he did not mean to kill his wife, but put hyoscine (a poison) into her food to curb her "voracious sexual appetite".

3 Lord Lucan. Fourteen years after the body of nanny Sandra Rivett was found in the basement of Lucan's

Lower Belgrave Street house there is still no new evidence. If Lucan returned tomorrow, however, it is doubtful whether the case against him would be sufficient to bring a murder conviction—so what's keeping him?

4 Richard III. The "Richard III Society" is still endeavouring to clear the "Bad King's" reputation, earned by arranging the murder of the Princes in the Tower in 1483.

5 Ken Halliwell, who in 1967 took a hammer to the head of his lover, playwright Joe Orton, in their Islington flat (thereafter committing suicide). The publication of Orton's diaries last year revealed Halliwell's obsessive jealousy of Orton's fame.

6 Ingram Frisar. The killer of another dramatist, Christopher Marlowe, in 1593. Although seemingly a straightforward stabbing, historians are unearthing Marlowe's connexions with Elizabeth I's secret service & asking whether Frisar was a paid assassin.

7 Ruth Ellis. Shot her lover, David Blakeley, outside a Hampstead pub in

1955. She was hanged for it—the last woman to suffer the death penalty in this country. Her case is still cited by those campaigning for more lenient sentences for crimes of passion.

8 Reginald Christie. Out of eight murders committed at 10 Rillington Place in the 1940s, Christie confessed to all except that of baby Geraldine Evans. Cynics now question whether initial suspect Timothy Evans (her father), hanged by mistake & posthumously pardoned, was in fact innocent.

9 Dennis Nilsen. The Muswell Hill psychopath who killed 15 people between 1979 and 83. Five of his victims have never been identified—who were they?

10 The INLA. Blew up Airey Neave MP in his car on the ramp of the house of Commons car park in 1979. Since Spycatcher, Neave has been closely associated with the right-wing plot to destabilize the 1974 Wilson government: the question some are now asking is whether MI6 and the INLA were in collusion.

OTHER EVENTS

London International Mime Festival. Venues throughout London host the world's largest festival of mime, visual theatre & comedy. In addition to new work from established companies like Nola Rae & the Polivka Company, comedy acts such as Ben Keaton & Australia's Los Trios Ringbarkus will be performing. The only event to cover everything from clowning to performance art, now celebrating its 10th year. (Information & full programme details, 637 5661.)

Mass Carib. A theatrical & original mass service, illustrating the black experience of Christianity, with a full choir, soloists, musicians & the all-black Irie Dance Company, Jan 4-10. Purcell Room, South Bank, SE1 (928 3191, CC 928 8800).

The Racing Car Show. All the enthusiast could ever dream of. Among the highlights is Bonhams' auction of competition cars. Jan 6-10. Alexandra Palace, N22 (883 6477).

BOOKS: THIS MONTH'S BEST SELLERS

HARDBACK NON FICTION

1 (1) Oscar Wilde by Richard Ellman. Hamish Hamilton, £11.95.

2 (-) One Day for Life by Search 88. Bantam Press, £16.95, Photographic record of one day in Britain.

3 (4) The Discovery of the Titanic by Robert D. Ballard. Hodder & Stoughton, £16.95.

4 (-) The Victorian Kitchen Garden by Jennifer Davies. BBC, £10.95. The restoration of a Berkshire garden.

5 (-) Glorious Needlepoint by Kaffe Fassett & Steve Lovi. Century, £16.95. A master details some of his secrets.

6 (-) The Great Philosophers by Bryan Magee. BBC, £14.95. A history of philosophy as seen through the eyes of contemporary philosophers.

7 (-) God Bless Her: a Life of the Queen Mother by Robert Lacey. Century, £10.95.

8 (–)**Timebends** by Arthur Miller. Methuen, £17.95. Autobiography of a major contemporary playwright.

9 (-) **Timpson's England** by John Timpson. Jarrold, £14.95. A quizzical look at England today.

10 (2) Behind the Wall: a Journey Through China by Colin Thubron. Heinemann, £12.95. This sad travel book is full of enthralling encounters.

PAPERBACK NON FICTION

1 (6) Fish Course by Susan Hicks. BBC, £6.95.

2 (-) Goodbye Soldier by Spike Milligan. Penguin, £2.95. Milligan goes to war.

3 (1) Floyd on France by Keith Floyd. BBC, £6.95. Rich, creamy, readable and indigestible!

4 (-) Orton Diaries edited by John Lahr. Methuen, £3.95. Sad chronicle of a talented playwright, but not for the squeamish.

5 (-) His Way: The Unauthorized Biography of Frank Sinatra by Kitty Kelley. Bantam £3.95. Readable, whether approved by its subject or not

6 (-) My Family and other Animals by Gerald Durrell. Penguin, £3.95.

7 (-) Equal Rites by Terry Pratchett. Corgi, £2.50. Making fun of fantasy. 8 (-) How to be a Complete Bitch by Pamela Stephenson. Virgin Books, £3.95.

9 (-) No Direction Home by Robert Shelton. Penguin, £4.95. A huge account of Bob Dylan, a major figure in the pop mythology.

10 (-) Cynthia Payne's Book of Home Entertainment by Cynthia Payne and Terence Blacker. Penguin £3.95.

HARDBACK FICTION

1 (-) Moon Tiger by Penelope Lively. André Deutsch, £9.95. The splendid Booker Prize winner.

2 (1) Hot Money by Dick Francis. Michael Joseph, £10.95.

3 (-) Winter by Len Deighton. Hutchinson, £11.95. An exciting novel set in Germany between 1900 and 1945.

4 (-) The Spring of the Ram by Dorothy Dunnett. Michael Joseph, £10.95. 5 (2) Chatterton by Peter Ackroyd. Hamish Hamilton, £10.95. A cleverly inventive but not totally successful

interpretation of the death of a poet. 6 (9) Firefly Summer by Maeve Binchy. Century, £11.95.

7 (4) The Colour of Blood by Brian Moore, Cape, £10.95. Exciting novel about a Polish primate who narrowly escapes assassination.

8 (-) **Presumed Innocent** by Scott Turow. Bloomsbury, £12.95. Exciting courtroom drama, soon to be made into a film.

9 (-) Wolf Winter by Clare Francis. Heinemann, £10.95. Suspense on the Finnish-Russian border at the height of the Cold War.

10 (3) The Book and the Brotherhood by Iris Murdoch. Chatto & Windus, £11.95.

PAPERBACK FICTION

1 (1) It by Stephen King. New English Library, £4.50. *The* evil menace confronted by a gang of children.

2 (-) **The Old Devils** by Kingsley Amis. (Penguin, £3.95). Wry story of small-town Wales.

3 (-) A Taste for Death by P. D. James. Faber, £5.95. Gloriously intricate crime fiction.

4 (6) **Bill Bailey** by Catherine Cookson. Corgi, £2.95.

5 (2) Night of the Fox by Jack Higgins. Pan Books, £2.95. A sub-standard performance by an old favourite. 6 (-) Whirlwind by James Clavell. Coronet, £4.95.

7 (-) A Perfect Spy by John le Carré. Coronet, £3.50. Of its sort, a perfect book.

8 (3) **Perfume** by Patrick Suskind. Penguin, £3.95. Original book about an ugly child with a heavenly sense of smell.

9 (4) A Matter of Honour by Jeffrey Archer. Coronet, £2.95.

10 (-) Fortunes of War, Volume 1: The Balkan Trilogy by Olivia Manning. Penguin, £5.95.

Brackets show last month's position. Information from Book Trust. Comments by Martyn Goff.



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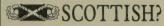
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The wrestle with a word's worth

Sebastian Faulks gives his pedantic daemon a rare outing

EVERY MAN has his daemon. With some it is an endlessly thirsty inner character who insists on being fed alcohol in damaging quantities. With some it is a frisky little satyr who will risk marriage, happiness and peace of mind for the sake of a moment's rapture. My daemon is kept padlocked in a dusty, unhygienic compound in the back of my brain. He is a querulous, be-cardiganed old bore of about 65 with cigarette ash down his front. In appearance he is not unlike Nicholas Ridley; in manner he is choleric, insistent and very disagreeable. His daemonic quality consists in a maddening pedantry about "correct" use of English grammar and syntax (naturally he insists on the distinction).

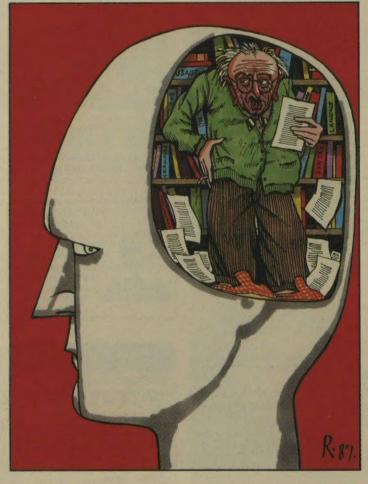
Once, worn down by his complaints, I submitted an article to a magazine on the current misuse of a certain word. How I regret it. The aging prop forward of the Berkshire Press Rugby XV still sometimes looks at me with a bemused incredulity. "That," he says, pointing his finger at me and shaking his head slowly from side to side, "is the man who wrote an entire article on the misuse of the word 'perceive'." I know what he means. There is something rid-

iculous in playing the schoolmaster and telling people how they should speak their own language. However (that dreaded conjunction), from time to time the slippered pedant rises up so strong inside my mind that it is hard to silence him.

I am winning. He was not pleased when journalists on The Independent followed the example of Radio Four and decided that criteria was a singular noun. "The sole criteria for selection," one reporter had begun his article; but as the quavering fuss-pot stuck up his hand to complain, I caught him with a late tackle from behind. Sure, I said, the reporter in question must be a little baffled when he sees the word "criterion", but that, I said, was his problem. Anyway, now that "criteria" has assumed the singular, he won't be seeing much of "criterion" again, will he?

Equally, when the foul-breathed bigot wraps his bony fingers round my wrist and bores me about the continued misuse of the word "internecine" I just slap him in the mouth. "Who cares?" I say; "words mean what people want them to mean."

Yes indeed, so it would appear," he replies; "when they talk of the internecine strife in the Labour Party I know what they think 'inter'



means, but what do they suppose that 'necine' signifies?"

His dreary point is that "internecine" means "very bloody" (Latin neco, I kill; inter used not to mean "among" but as an "intensifier" of neco; thus someone who told his lover te interamo would be red hot). The First World War was internecine, he claims; the Civil War was not. "Give over," I reply.

Just once in a while, however (and here that conjunction really spells trouble), there comes a misuse so startling that it would be cruel not to let the old fool have an outing. His ravings, while unpublishable, do make interesting reading in the same way as the diary of a schizophrenic (a word, he reminds me, that has nothing to do with "split personality"). So here, for the first time in three years, a pedant writes (or rather, froths):

"A strange blight has spread from Spain, where it began in the heat of last summer's World Cup. Watching a re-run of an England attempt on goal, a commentator said: 'If Beardsley had passed, Lineker may have scored.' A laughable mistake, you might have thought. But no: it has caught on to the extent that it now appears not just out of the mouths of soccer managers but also in the printed pages of Britain's 'quality' newspapers.

'A short while ago the Jermyn Street shirtmakers Hilditch & Key ran a pseudo-pompous advertisement concerning a consumer comparison done by a Sunday Times journalist looking for a good shirt. Hilditch & Key had won his vote. After a little mock-Augustan boasting, the advertisement concluded: 'However, we feel that had the writer seen our new Autumn Collection of colours and styles for men and women, he may well have run out of superlatives.

"My reactions were as follows: Would you buy a shirt from someone who doesn't understand his tenses? 'Your shirt is ready, sir,' he might say. You go to pick it up and discover what he meant was 'your shirt will be ready.'

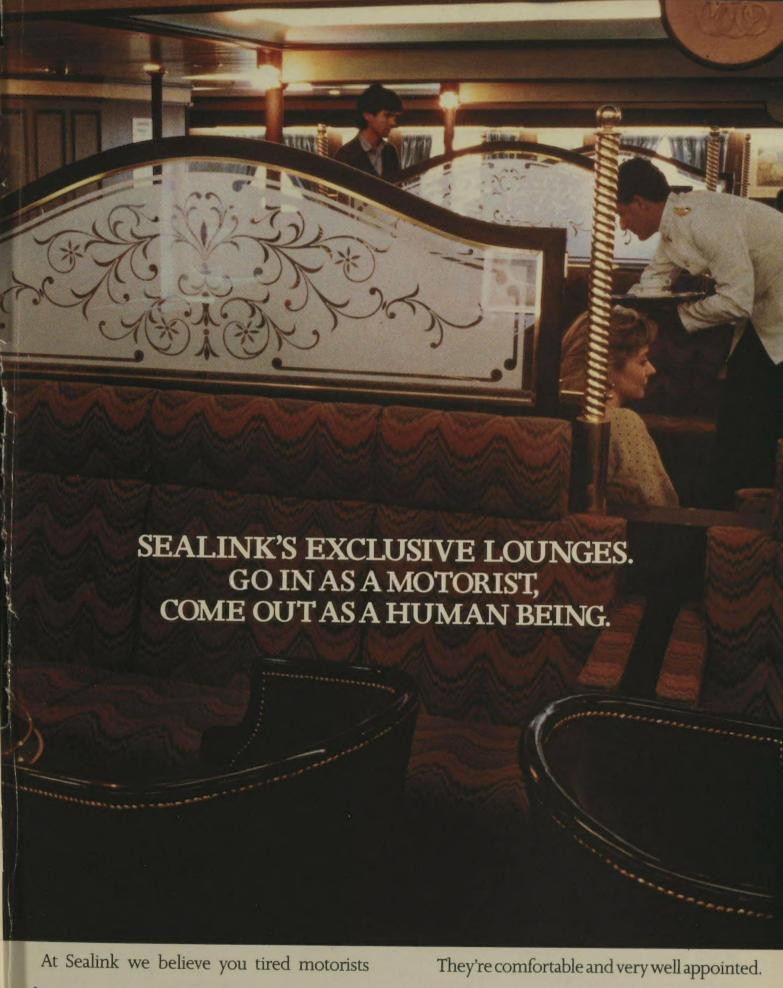
"In November a national paper ran a feature on the Battle of Passchendaele. The caption on the picture read: 'Had rain and mud not bogged down the British advance at Passchendaele, Germany may well have broken in November, 1917.

"Germany may well have broken in 1917? Really? Hold the front page! Re-write the history books! Millions died in vain shock! The interesting thing about this

phenomenon is the apparent lack of defence that even professional copywriters and journalists have against such misuse. The people responsible for the above examples must have been using 'may' and 'might' correctly for at least 20 years, probably much longer: it is a distinction you learn at about the age of five. Yet they overhear just a few instances of an obviously absurd solecism and at once forget millions of correct usages. It is as if their immune system has broken down; they have the linguistic equivalent of AIDS.

And so the old fool raves on. You can see why I have had to put him back in his box, nail down the lid and lock him in the compound. For a start, he's so bad-tempered! Another good reason for never letting my pedantic daemon get the upper hand and send off one of his ranting articles to the papers is this: that some strange law dictates that every article that criticizes other people's use of language will itself contain at least one simple error. And so, regretfully. I must decline the editor's invitation to write a short article on some current abuses of English. It is not worth the mockery it will provoke O

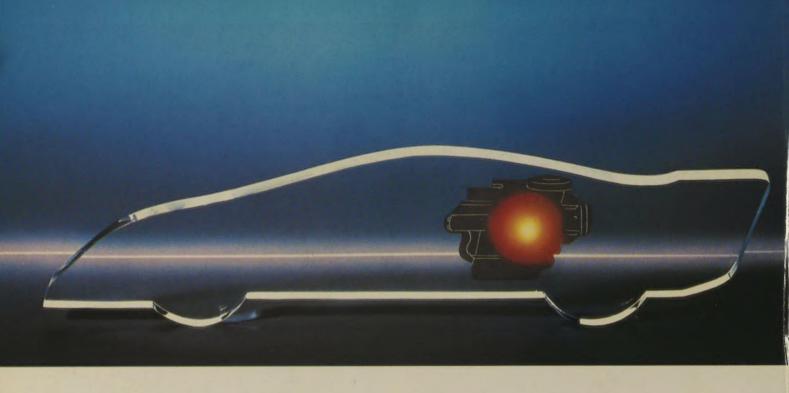
Sebastian Faulks is literary editor of The Independent



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